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RECREATIONS
OF
A LITERARY MAN
OR
DOES WRITING PAY?


By PERCY FITZGERALD



A NEW EDITION

London
CHATTO AND WINDUS, PICCADILLY
1883

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PR 4705

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1882



INSCRIBED TO
MY MOTHER,
WHO WILL BEST APPRECIATE
THESE PAGES.







PREFACE.

THESE "Recreations" or Confessions may, I fear, be accounted somewhat egotistical. This, however, is unavoidable in a book of the kind. The object has been to put before the reader, in the frankest way, the experiences of a Literary Life, together with some hints on the Art of Enjoying Trifles. I have also been encouraged by the remark of Lord Orford, that whoever set down truthfully and simply what he had felt and observed, could not fail of making an interesting book.



PREFACE TO THE NEW EDITION.

ONE result of the following "Confessions" has been a flood of letters from all quarters, from foreign countries even, addressed to the author, for counsel, direction, and, in more veiled shape, for assistance. Nearly the same tale was told in all these communications. Each had read the "interesting narrative," some with infinite "delight:" to say nothing of other compliments; but all wished to be put in the way of disposing of manuscripts with all convenient speed. Many of these appeals had a certain piteousness, setting out the hopeless reiteration of writing and copying, and posting to the different flinty publishers, with the almost invariable result. They had toiled round and round the enchanted walls, and tried every gate. The stone had been rolled up with infinite labour again and again, only to descend with a regularity as infinite.

It is to be feared there is no recipe in the matter.



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Literal imitation of successful instances will not do. It was thus that a well-known English actress, after unsuccessfully essaying one of Croizette's characters, complained bitterly that she had been at the trouble of going to Paris, to reproduce the gestures, tones, minutest action, dresses : that therefore SHE had done her best : and the rest was the fault of the public. At the bar, or in medicine, we see some composed, resolute-looking young man almost at once creep into business, ~~no~~ one can say why. In this manuscript-sending, there are many things and chances that operate. The piece may be new, fresh, and striking ; but there are the chances against its being read, or read fairly. Or this opening may have been secured, but perhaps in the case of something poor and conventional. Again, the same thing, when sent forth with the *cachet* of a well-known writer, will seem jejune ; in the case of a beginner, ambitious. We have learned the voice and manner of the older hand, while the boldness and acuteness of the new-comer seems forward. Said Elia, " All things read raw to me in manuscript ; " and even a really clever production submitted for judgment by a beginner, has crude associations which colour the judgment. I was once sitting with the late Mr. Le Fanu, his relative the brilliant Miss Rhoda Broughton being present ; the talk turning on writing, she, with much

diffidence and hesitation, confessed to having tried her hand at writing a novel, and said that she would be glad if we, who had passed through the fire of publication, would give our opinion on a specimen. A chapter was fetched down and read aloud—one of the best in that most powerful tale, “Not Wisely, but Too Well,” and I recall the patronizing encouragement of the two judges; the “Very good *indeed!*” “Much promise,” etc. They spoke as they felt, and were surprised; but, it must be frankly confessed, never conceived that the most piquante and brilliant, not to say most successful, novelist of her time was before them. In such cases, too, there is always the uncertainty as to what may please or “hit” the public. It is curious to think how few are the works, solemnly ratified and guaranteed by the professional critic or reader, such as “Jane Eyre,” that have answered to such forecast; compared with the numbers that, by some happy accident or fitness, have swept into a whirl of popularity, and passed through edition after edition. Though here is suggested another reflection: how out of all proportion to merit, is the exaggerated praise and reputation of works thus fashionably popular. It perplexes one now to take up such works as the “Ride to Khiva” or the “Voyage of the *Sunbeam*,” and think how much and how extravagantly they were “the rage”

in their day. Nay, we shall even wonder, some years hence, what gave "John Inglesant" its special charm and attraction, and its enormous sale.

Besides drawing forth such communications, this little book has given occasion to many interesting speculations and discussions on the subject of writing and its profits. Some time ago Mr. James Payn, the novelist, was the first to start a discussion on the mechanism of novel-writing, which, from so skilled and popular a writer, was doubly valuable. In my own case, the frank avowal of what had been the profits of some years of diligent writing, seems to have been received with very mixed feelings, compounded of distrust, scepticism, annoyance, and, in a few instances, of congratulation. One leading journal seemed to deem it rather unhandsome that "Mr. Fitzgerald, being possessed of private means of his own," should, as it were, proceed to take the bread out of the mouths of other people not so fortunately provided. Others complained that the treating of so many subjects, biographical and otherwise, anticipated good men and true, who might have taken up those very subjects, and treated them in more competent style. The *Pall Mall Gazette* was hurt beyond expression at the notion that a successful writer should often have boxes and stalls sent to him.

But, in truth, the general criticism of our time is



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a subject for curious reflection, and would have furnished an interesting chapter. The criticism of criticism is, however, rather a delicate matter. In fact, the intention in writing these pages has been the simple one of giving a picture of an unpretending literary life, sweetened by the enjoyment of writing and reading: just as a great writer showed, long ago, that one could find plenty of enjoyment in "travelling round one's room."

ATHENÆUM CLUB,
November, 1882.

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RECREATIONS OF A LITERARY MAN.

CHAPTER I.

THE STUDY.

LIFTING the heavy curtain which hangs before so many London interiors, very opposite views will present themselves of the labouring literary man at his work. With some there is the *res angusta domi*, "the wolf at the door," the large family above; the weary pen is plied desperately, like the spade, and the room is but another form of workshop. Nothing is more curious than the contrast between the jocund Christmas story, in which luxurious scenes of enjoyment are painted and revels take place; charming girls, gallant youths, and good-natured fathers and uncles, with their ever-ready cheque-books, flit across—and the almost rude room and well-inked desk at which the worn, overworked writer sits to conjure up these unreal dreams. On the other hand, there are the happy few who have been successful, and are at their ease, and who may use writing as their walking-stick, and not as a crutch.

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Most writers who own to a taste for their work—and there is something fascinating in the calling—can hardly help impressing their own fancies on what surrounds them as they labour. The room, its desk, the pictures, the very chair, are all combined and associated with memorable thoughts, ways, and works. The novel, the sketch, the successful “life,” all were formed and developed here. Here were forgotten the world’s troubles outside, in those exciting, thrilling last chapters, written at a white heat and at a stretch against time, from morning all through the night until morning again—just as Ainsworth wrote his “Turpin’s Ride to York.” Here are the little cherished objects picked up in many a walk; the portrait with autograph given by a greater author. In short, in a course of long years there will be a gathering of favourite things, each associated, it may be, with something pleasant. A little taste—not to a ridiculous and costly æsthetic excess—does much. It can be known with a glance when “things”—Queen Anne, Cinquecento, and the rest—have been ordered home to give the room an antique air, and when they have been brought together in the slow natural process thus described.

Charles Lamb described in a vivid cozy way the scene when the day’s work is done. The curtains are drawn, “the world is shut out,” the fire stirred, the favourite book taken down, and, it may be added, the pipe lit, the favourite dog snoozing lazily on the rug. Those are the welcome, enjoyable hours, from, say, ten till midnight or past. Such a scene is now before me;—the room, the walls of dark flowered green for three-fourths of the height, the rest to the ceiling of a paler shade, the border between both of a maroon velvet with an oak moulding. Deep crimson curtains hang in

heavy folds. Bookcases, not glazed (which, as Elia would say, are heartless), run along one side some five feet high—giving a sufficiency of long rows of shelves. The rest of the walls are cheerful with choice favourites, picked up as I have described. In the corner a bronzed bust of Mr. Carlyle, arrayed in his favourite broad-brimmed hat—no indifferent likeness. Pictures on glass, richly coloured; a fine etching or two—the magnificent “Mrs. Bischoffsheim” of Millais, vivid and brilliant—are perpetual company. A bold blue bit of colour, a Worcester dish, a few china figures on brackets, complete the decorations. These things cost but trifles—the etching but half-a-crown, being one of the “L’Art” series. An old-fashioned *écritoire*, its drawers wavy-lined, was a rare bargain, “picked up” Islington-wards for thirty shillings. For the same sum a corresponding table, old French, was secured. A Turkey rug and a stained oak floor may finish the catalogue. All these things cost not nearly so much as the ordinary showy things of commerce, but are much more effective. A little taste really saves money; and he who is furnished with it can always indulge it *bon marché*.

From below, hark to the whirring wheezing sound of the cuckoo clock, with its friendly chirrup of quail and cuckoo, which has thus sounded quarterly—or every quarter—uninterrupted, almost, for a course of twelve years, night and day. As with a dog or faithful servant who has been with you long, so with those two trusty little birds, one gradually gains an affection and a sense of companionship. There is something cheerful and cheering in the tone, heard in the watches of the night or at dawn, without any failure of duty during that long period. At every quarter the

little door to the left flies open brusquely, and with some clatter out leaps the little fluttering quail, and with open mouth and flapping wing gives his "Too-too!" and retires; while his neighbour's door bursts open and reveals the principal performer, the cuckoo, who, attended by sonorous gong, sounds the hour. This little performance, trivial as it seems, lends a dramatic interest to so simple an operation as striking the time. When contracting for the purchase long ago—it was on one of the sylvan walks at Spa—there was a hesitation as to the claims of another more elaborate time-keeper, where the doors of two sentry-boxes flew open, and two soldiers appeared, who, performing first a flourish of trumpets, sounded the hour solemnly, and then retired as they came. Later, recounting these little phenomena to Mr. Dickens, ever appreciative of such details, he entered into the idea, and played with it in his own pleasant style. He drew a picture of the soldiers coming out to perform their solos; but the invariable hitch would come: the door would catch, and but partially open, the *militaire* meanwhile vainly attempting to get out, checked; his arm, it might be, caught in the act of being raised for the flourish—the result being feeble wheezes and spasms behind the door, which would throb at his ineffectual efforts, subsiding into total inaction; his fellow, however, coming up bravely to time and starting fairly, but suddenly brought up motionless. Then a surgeon sent for; when, on probing, and the release of some catch behind, the struggling trumpeter would burst his door open and finish his suspended solo. This seems trivial now, but his friends will recall how thoroughly it was in his manner, and how it would be set off by his expressive face and bright eyes twinkling with humour.



CHAPTER II.

PATERNOSTER ROW.

FOR many years now, I have been an industrious *littérateur*—of all work, I may add, and labouring in all the departments. At the same time, this work has not been what is called “hard,” such as that of a barrister in good practice, but of a rapid and concentrated kind. The result is that I have succeeded in earning by my brains a sum that I fancy will surprise, though I delay naming it until I have communicated my little experiences. These, I fancy, will be a useful contribution to the question, whether writing be a profitable profession. And as for the greater portion of the time I have kept a sort of fee-book, it is really no speculative appraisement.

For at least half the period alluded to I followed the profession of the bar ; and it may be said that this word “following” is well chosen, for it entailed daily attendance for a number of hours. But the profession scarcely followed me as well as I followed it, though it brought in certain returns, and engrossed a share of attention. Yet I contrived gaily and with a light heart to woo and win the more engaging sister, who eventually rewarded me in the satisfactory way described. She gave me a return for the off-hand, rattling, and somewhat careless attention bestowed upon her.

I do not put myself in the first rank, nor in the second—I might modestly enter the third ; though some might reasonably dispute with me even that unpretending place. What have I done ? what is my “literary baggage” ? is naturally the next ques-

tion. Not long ago, an ingenious Dryasdust took the trouble to hunt up the name of the person to whom a well-known writer had addressed his letters. There were private reasons for not mentioning the name. But what did that concern the detective? He set to work, and discovered it by following out certain allusions in the text, hunting through newspapers of the day, and arrived by a most exhaustive process at its solution. Without being over confidential, I may confess that this same "baggage" consists of great biographical chests—heavy, perhaps massive; of light serial portmanteaux, or novels and tales, three-, two-, and one- vol.; hat-boxes; bags, Gladstone "collapsing," and some collapsed, in the form of volumes of essays, short stories, disquisitions, criticisms, etc. I have written plays that have succeeded, and plays that have failed, and have been paid sufficiently in both categories. I have been a dramatic critic. I have attended a music-hall opening, and an exhibition of fans, as "our own reporter." I have contributed to an advertising paper which was left gratuitously at all doors,—and which dealt with its contributors on the same principle. I have "gone special" to the Continent for one of the great leading daily papers, and I have written for almost every magazine that has been born, died, or exists. I have written on painting, music, building, decorative art, dress, the classics, history, travels, my own life, the lives of other people, dancing, etc. In short, like Swift and his broomstick, I have learned the knack of writing decently and respectably on any subject "briefed" to me.

It will be said, however, that this confession is, as it were, *hors concours*, and of no value as a contribution to the question, as a person with this general versatility must gain money as a matter of



course. Not at all. It is the gaining of money that has brought or stimulated these gifts, rather than the gifts that have brought the money. This may be paradoxical, but if I might liken myself to so successful a personage, it is exactly akin to the progress of the great Mr. William Whiteley—who added to his departments, now a grocery, now a butchery, now coals, etc., according as the demand on him came. My wares I would not, of course, pretend to be of the same quality as his, be they excellent or the reverse; but the analogy holds. I did all these things, and do them still, though we all feel, like other *entrepreneurs*, the pressure of the times.

The stock-in-trade for all this is, of course, first a general taste for literature, and a familiarity with all the blind alleys, "wynds," crannies, and passages of letters, which are invaluable in furnishing subjects for essays. This is all amusing reading to the person with the proper taste, and you can go on for ever emptying the stuff out of the old clumsy demijohns into nice modern flasks. There are innumerable forgotten personages and episodes which can be treated, and become new and interesting in the treatment. This is all acquired. So, too, is style—that ready, lively, and superficial style, though it takes a long time. But I had better begin at the beginning, and tell, "from the egg," how I became a writer.

This style, then, with a certain dramatic way of putting things so as to present a picture without the formal lines of a picture, which shall yet interest, I unconsciously secured very early and with little trouble. On leaving a great school for which I had an extraordinary affection, and where I had spent some happy and even romantic days, I fell into the habit of trying to reproduce

the old impressions in writing, recalling the pleasant scenes after as vivid a fashion as I could. As this was often done, and earnestly done, and with all sincerity, the same scene being described and redescribed as often as the humour seized me, there came to be a certain rude power and vividness in the description which I recognize now when turning over the innumerable volumes with their crowded pages and minute writing. What eyes one had then! Even now the figures move, the lights glitter, the pleasant fragrance of the past exhales. Any one that saw this huge mass of manuscript, and the mass of description, characters, dialogues, and incidents therein contained, would admit that here was an advantage in the way of training of no inconsiderable kind.

So far, there was no advance. All the world has written in private records, and in local papers, to say nothing of the privately (and expensively) printed volumes of poems. But in my case, as indeed in most other cases, it is the first difficult step that costs, and that makes or mars. Just as in mastering skating evolutions: until you have fearlessly thrown yourself on the outside edge, nothing can be done or ever will be done.

Presently, of course, came the early contributions to the local paper, and the delight of seeing it in the local paper's type—the only form of recognition, too, known to the local papers. All writers agree in the special and unique sweetness of this sensation. I confess I always feel the charm of print.

Every writer recalls with a peculiar delight that first entering into print, be it even into the "Poet's Corner" of the local newspapers. There is almost a delicious intoxication connected with the sensation. Every writer has probably this humble

beginning. To a local newspaper, distributed gratis, half its surface being devoted to advertisements, the rest filled in with abundant "literary matters" ("We regret," generally say the proprietors, "that the circulation of the paper does not, *as yet*, admit of offering remuneration to our contributors")—to such an organ was timorously offered a story called "The Little Quarto," a scene relating to the purchase, in an auction-room, of a small volume, which the poverty, not the will, of a bidder compelled him to deny himself. How well I recall the actual terms of its acceptance in the notices to correspondents!—"Your sketch is happy and humorous. It shall appear." And when it did appear, was not it read aloud in full household—ay, read twice and thrice, lent with pride to a select neighbour or two; the news not generally, however, published, as being likely to be hurtful to one going to a learned profession? I always look with infinite relish to that old drab-coloured magazine, now actually before me, the *Monthly* of February, 1834, which contains "Horatio Sparkins"—Dickens's second contribution—and think of his agitation only a few weeks before, when he saw his first in the same journal. It has a strange sacred interest, this magazine of now nearly fifty years ago.

Not for some years did I venture on a bolder flight. Mr. Leitch Ritchie's name I always hold in regard and veneration, as it was from his hand that the first of the golden showers began to descend. A paper called "A Page of Professional Life," describing that of a Belgian professor in the sixteenth century, was despatched to *Chambers's Journal*, with but little hope, in truth; but there was returned speedily a letter in these words: "Sir, there is something novel in your sketch, and

I shall try and find a place for it in the *Journal*. The remuneration is one pound per printed page." One pound! A fortune! A place was found within a short time; then came the almost ecstatic delight of the post-office order, the first *earned* money. The little story accidentally had merits for success; it was legible, short, and dramatic. I have no doubt, too, some accident determined its reception, akin to the turn of a card; it might have been tossed aside or returned with thanks. A grave letter of approval was returned, and two pounds ten.

I fear that nowadays this advantage of having his contributions read for approval is lost to the beginner, as the packets sent in are overwhelming. Two or three other papers were accepted. I could have poured them in or out as by machinery; but then began certain disagreeable checks—not for cash—but "unsuitable," "no space," "so much in type," which conveyed the first lesson in writing profitably, that you must not merely put all your eggs in one basket, but must have about as many baskets as eggs. What will not suit one will suit another; what there is not room for in one there will be room for in another; as a man with many daughters offers his fairest to a man of means and position, and gives his ugliest with money to a man of good will though obscure. So I now cast about for new channels, and tried and tried till I was heartsick and angry, meeting for my investment in paper and postage-stamps, certainly, large returns. I very soon saw that this system would not do, and that one might go on posting contributions for the term of one's natural life without result, save the restoration of the compositions—about as disagreeable a thing as the news of their loss. A total reversal of this policy

and a brilliant *coup* in quite a new direction was rewarded with success, and set me on the road to fortune.

There was at this time a well-known *littérateur*, or critic and writer of authority and Johnsonian prestige, who was engaged upon a most important work of biography, "The Life of Swift." This was Mr. John Forster. "The Clarendon notes," he wrote, "as reproduced by you, are most valuable, and I observe several memoranda at the close, on which I shall take another opportunity of writing to you. If the memoranda you have taken of the principal 'marked paragraphs' enable you to tell me what passages they seem to have been (apart from those to which the marginal comments apply) which most attracted his attention, perhaps you will some time or other indicate them to me. A mere *general* notice as to that is all I require. But so delightful are these little sketches you send me, so exactly what it comes within my plan to use wherever we may yet be able to get upon his actual *footprints* in this way, that I will not scruple to ask you to add to them whatever may hereafter occur to you. Though the tomb has been often done, still your sketch I would rather have than any other. If the actual house in Hoeys Court be still standing too (it is sketched in Mr. Wilde's book), and if you could give me a little view of the Deanery—in short, of any place or locality associated with him of which actual living vestiges remain—all will be very welcome to me. You see how unscrupulous already your kindness has made me; but I am sure I best show my sense of its worth by receiving it as frankly as it is offered. It will be a true pleasure to me to acknowledge it in the edition it helps me to enrich." I was at the time much interested in him and his sub-

ject, and as I lived in the city where his hero had flourished, I set to work to collect matter that would be useful to him. In particular, I nearly blinded myself deciphering some "marginalia," as they are called, in some huge folios preserved in an old library, drew neat water-colour sketches of localities, collected traditions, and, in short, made myself rather useful, and earned his grateful acknowledgment. That was the beginning of a long friendship.

At this time also the amiable as well as gifted Dickens was flourishing in the height of his popularity, and directing his *Household Words* with great success. To be a writer in that journal and associated with so great a master was, in itself, an enormous advantage, which writers in other periodicals were devoid of. I ventured to presume on the grateful feelings of my new friend in this useful direction. Previously I had, indeed, essayed an entrance to the Wellington Street Paradise, but had been firmly but courteously repulsed by the Peri who stood at the gate—the late Mr. W. H. Wills, who returned their contributions to the contributors with a lithographic circular, in which they were assured their efforts had been read and weighed, as was the custom of the office. This may have been a good-natured exaggeration for reading an extract or glancing at the whole; for the daily post brought pounds of such matters which no staff could have grappled with. It was long, however, a tradition of the place how my patron strode in one morning, and, laying down the document, required that it should "be *seen to at once*, and set up in type." He was a man not to be trifled with. Within a fortnight it appeared. It was a not undramatic tale, in the vein of Mr. Wilkie Collins, then in high fashion. I had been

again lucky in the subject and treatment ; it was short and telling. There seemed to be an *empressement* even to secure me. Had I anything else ready ? The Christmas Number was getting ready — would I be able to send them something for *that* ? On that hint I set to work, and from that moment to the present have never ceased to work for that pleasant journal, the connection with which under the *régime* of father and son has ever been agreeable and satisfactory. The word “satisfactory” recalls me to the point of this chapter, for it represents in this case many thousand pounds, as the ledgers of *Household Words* and *All the Year Round* can tell. The moral, also, is that other agencies besides literary merit are essential in earning money ; there must be knowledge of men and things. The assiduous showering in of papers will not do. One might ply this method for a whole life with, of course, the chance that a stray paper on some timely and seasonable subject might arrest the editor’s eye and gain adoption. There must be some contrived personal relation between the contracting parties, otherwise there is no more interest in you than in the manuscript itself. You are no more than one of many bundles of manuscript, always an object of repulsion, to be put aside or held over as long as possible, like the poor patients at a doctor’s. Hence the indifferent chance of the tribe of governesses, clergymen’s wives and daughters, clerks and others, who write from provincial towns, who are made sick all the year round with deferred hope, and receive back their productions which are “declined with thanks,” as a sort of favour. Hence, too, some courageous fellows who have come to London to push their way personally, like Johnson and others, have shown more wisdom and policy than they have obtained credit for. I

have known not a few to succeed, not by their literary merit, which was indifferent, but by the art of making themselves useful and necessary, and of doing some little job which a bare chance threw in their way, in a style that they made especially satisfactory. In short, friends and connection is the basis. I know one instance, at least, of this sort of energy and purpose being quite successful—a young fellow marrying, and, after due deliberation, selecting this profession. He set to work at once, got introductions, and began his uphill task. He had his qualities of care and industry, and could be depended on. It seemed madness at the first, but in two or three years he had “formed a connection,” was found useful, and now, at the end of five or six years, I find his name known, while he himself writes to me in the capacity of editor. He is sure to succeed.

Once established on *Household Words*, I found that the mere connection with that journal and its director was a passport to other magazines. For the first year my return was, I think, some fourteen to fifteen pounds. The next year it rose to sixty or seventy; the next it grew into hundreds. As to the paper itself, I saw that what was required was originality of subject, something fresh and taking. I gave great thought to the selection of what would be desirable. This is really in itself an art and of the highest importance, for if it be found that you are sending in what is unsuitable your credit sinks, and your at last really suitable article may share the fate of others. Where, too, the contributor is to be depended on, his paper goes unread to the printers to be “set up.” Nothing used to be pleasanter than a periodical visit to the office to “settle subjects” with the editor.

But to show how pleasant profit and pleasure

may be combined in this most agreeable of all professions, I will note one "department," which I have exploited systematically, to my own great enjoyment, and I hope to the satisfaction of others concerned. I have travelled a great deal, *but never at my own cost: rather, to exceeding profit.* I will give some special instances. I once spent a single week in Holland, and wrote twelve papers—"Down among the Dutchmen!" they were called—on the country, for a journal, for which I received forty pounds, the net profit being thirty. I went specially to Rome at an interesting period, wrote observations on men and manners in a series of twenty papers, for which I received sixty pounds. They were also published in a volume for which I had received seventy—leaving a net profit after expenses of eighty pounds. I have never made an expedition to France, Belgium, Ireland, anywhere, without turning it into cash. Nay, I have never been anywhere or seen anything important without making it take this agreeable shape of profit. During the French war, when the Germans were advancing on Paris, I was eager to put this favourite principle in action. But special writers and correspondents were abundant, and every one was well supplied; so the chance of seeing anything as a commissioned writer was desperate. However, a friendly editor in conversation was excited by the prospect of a vivid sketch of the unhappy city on the eve of a siege, and offered to "stand" all railway expenses to the scene of action, as well as the usual charge for an article. I look back to that hurried and dramatic expedition with infinite pleasure. There is something flattering to the *amour propre* in being thus despatched at the cost of others.

Another hurried expedition of the kind not only

forms a delightful recollection, but illustrates what I said of the necessity of a certain judgment and nice sense of what is "the psychological moment" to secure success in writing. If any ordinary writer of position were to offer himself as special correspondent to any of the greater daily journals, his services would, to a certainty, be declined, on the ground that their own staff was sufficient. Yet on one occasion I was lucky enough to enter the charmed circle, simply owing to a happy combination and prompt seizure of the "psychological moment," as our neighbours call it. It was a few days after Christmas Day, in the year of the suppression of the gaming-houses in Germany. It occurred to me that it would be interesting to record the dying struggle of these institutions. I wondered, would there be any chronicle thereof in the great papers? I resolved to address two leading ones with a suggestion of the subject. One took no notice; from the other came a hurried despatch acceding to the idea, and fixing an almost midnight interview. The thought even now gives me pleasure. There was no time to be lost. How pleasant the hurried interview with the editor, planning the arrangement! I started, travelling all night. It was a pleasant sense of importance to find oneself in the German telegraph-office at Homburg on that frosty day, the town deserted, and writing a long telegraph message to the newspaper—*my* newspaper—whereof I was the special. I hurried back, got to town that night, and instantly sat down to write a couple of "cols.," which appeared next morning. The whole expedition by sea and land, there and back, the writing of the long article, was all accomplished within sixty to seventy hours. I received a most handsome *honoraire* for what was really only a pleasure trip.

But now came the idea of a larger and more profitable extension—the novel—which the success of Miss Braddon, may be said to have opened up for the average writer. Fifteen or twenty years ago, the various topics of character and incident—the “sensation,” the wicked woman of sensation, the hulking muscular man of unbridled passions, and the female with steel eyes, cold heart, and yellow hair—were novelties, and people loved to hear as much as possible about them, and from any description of writer. These are now all hackneyed and “used up.” Delineation of characters of the “Jane Eyre” model was in fashion. Good prices were paid, and it was actually stated that, by the system at the libraries, and owing to the voracious greed of readers, any story in three volumes, by any writer, was certain to “do”—to return even some meagre remuneration to its writer. Thus inspired, I determined to set my skiff afloat on the already crowded stream. A friend who was directing a magazine that enjoyed a gasping asthmatic sort of existence furnished an opening, and allowed me to “run” this first immature effort through his pages. The remuneration was fixed at, I think, five-and-twenty or thirty pounds. The production was issued in two volumes by a firm which, awkwardly enough, was at the moment in the agonies of death, so the child actually perished with the mother that brought it forth. The late Mr. Bentley was at that time directing his firm, a man of energy and spirit; to him, as a desperate chance, it was sent as a specimen of the author’s powers. This spirited man interposed with an act which seems to belong to the romance of publishing, and, with an intrepidity now unfamiliar to the Row, said, “Write me a novel in three volumes as good, and

I will give you one hundred and fifty pounds!" Trumpet-tongued words indeed, which I fear neither Smith nor Jones nor clergyman's daughter is ever likely to hear again. I complied with a jocund alacrity. First the work went through my friendly editor's journal, by which some thirty pounds adhered to it; it then came forth from Burlington Street with a fictitious name attached to it. It was called "*BELLA DONNA*," and was given out as written by one Gilbert Dyce. It was a success, and passed through two editions, and still sells. With these credentials I applied to my editor of Wellington Street; he, having read my successful venture, gave me an order for a story, at what seemed a munificent remuneration—this, too, without having seen a line of the story, and with the further handsome treatment of accepting merely a few chapters in hand as a sufficient instalment, with which to start.

But, indeed, to the records of the generosity and confidence of the "chief," as we would call him, there was no end. To this, however, I shall return later. Nothing, too, was more delightful than his hearty relish and appreciation of anything to be approved, though indeed the chief merit of most of these productions was that they were ingeniously successful imitations of his own manner. All that laboured, if it can be called labour, under such auspices—"G. A. S.," Yates, Moy Thomas, Halliday (defunct now), Dutton Cook, Hollingshead, and myself (most industrious and perhaps making his bow oftenest)—can, or could, tell the same story. For this journal I have written no fewer than seven novels, which have brought me, in their magazine shape alone, two thousand pounds; have altogether written some fifteen stories, each contrived "a double debt to pay," and first passed through the

periodical press before appearance in its orthodox coat of three or two volumes. The total receipts from this source have been close on three thousand pounds. Many of the books have gone through two editions, one has gone through four, and several enjoy a steady annual sale—their titles familiar enough at the railway bookstalls.

This, however, would have been but a poor result spread over so many years. So the next golden or profitable rule of the system soon suggested itself, viz. while you kept literary fire all ablaze and crackling, to have a number of irons heating in it. And I not only had a number of irons—I once drove three novels abreast—but a number of fires. Whether, as the wit said, your writings should go where your irons are, is another important question, and might dispense with discussion of the matter at all. But this “versatility” not only furnishes relief, but, as a source of profit, is invaluable. I accordingly very soon had broken new ground with my literary “pick,” and started writing the lives of important personages, neglected unaccountably, as it seemed to me, till I took them in hand. I am ashamed when I think of the free-and-easy mode in which I selected these great men for resurrection purposes; but I am bound to own that there was some art and nice judgment in the choice. One, the most successful of the series, was suggested by the publisher, taken in hand that night, and completed—“polished off,” the irreverent would say—in three months. It was disposed of—they were always respectable, portly, squire-looking things, two vols. octavo—to the tune of eight hundred copies at thirty shillings. In this department I wrote; for four or five of such monuments I received nigh a thousand pounds, most of them, however, having also paid the double

debt before alluded to. Again another stroke of the pick, and I became "an editor" of works—a laborious and unprofitable duty. I "edited" two masters of English literature, but great favourites of mine, for twenty pounds apiece. They filled nine large volumes. But these were truly labours of love, and, in the case of an author I was fond of, I would cheerfully go through any such drudgery unremunerated. There is nothing so fascinating as working thus on an author, hunting up evidence, and finding it, to illustrate obscure passages. Nothing I ever did was more enjoyable to me than preparing an edition of "Boswell's Johnson."

The "double debt to pay" principle is an admirable one, but requires some art to carry out. A great difficulty, as it might seem at first sight, would be the disposal in this wise of the innumerable short tales which the diligent writers turn out, much as the diligent painter does his "pot-boilers." These I used to collect in the old palmy days in volumes, as Mr. Wilkie Collins might do now. Publishers will now have nothing to do with such miscellanies. But I was not daunted, and, after issuing a volume, ventured on the familiar device of collecting a number of persons on a journey and making them tell stories. I was not, however, *au bout*, and had another and more original device on my banner, namely, writing each short story in such a way that it shall be complete and yet form part of a whole—like the shield platform formed by Rienzi's soldiers, in the late representation of the opera. Each is carefully written in the same character, and forms an episode in his experience. Thus the casual reader is gratified, while I am equally so. On this principle I lately issued a three-volume novel which was itself a continuous story, and yet was composed of all the short humorous

stories I had written during the past dozen years.

These various productions might fill from sixty to seventy volumes of the official form, while the scattered papers, if brought together, would raise the tale to nearly one hundred. The material with which the literary baggage is packed is gathered from the sources before mentioned, namely, "curious" reading in all directions ; but the chief supply is drawn from myself. It is not too much to say that all the incidents of my life, such as it is—feelings, thoughts, loves, sights, characters—have been pressed in to do duty, more or less coloured and treated, but giving a genuineness and vitality which always quickened the pace of the pen. I wrote an account of my school-days in a series of papers for Mr. Dickens, with which he was much pleased ; these figured duly in several numbers of his *Journal* at a return of a good many pounds, and, with some additions, reappeared as a little volume which enjoyed much popularity, and ran through three editions in a few months. For this, however, I only received twenty pounds more ; but then, we did not anticipate this success. I may be pardoned for adding, that the *Journal* "written for gentlemen" declared that my book was superior to the popular "Tom Brown." Still, the outlay in time and composition was far below the sum I received, as it amounted to little more than that employed in writing letters to friends, or one's journal. Mr. James Payn lately started an interesting discussion as to the springs from which the novelist was to draw inspiration—whence gather his story, characters, etc. The discussion also gave rise to some ingenious suggestions as to story, etc. My belief is, that no one can *devise* a character ; all my own, such as they are, have been drawn from

real life. But I would say that there was art in this process; a literal copy is worthless and has small effect. In my own case, the personages would not recognize themselves. I have seen instances where the very speeches and actions of certain eccentric persons, producing extreme mirth in society, have been literally set down, without any humorous results. The art consists in abstracting the peculiar phenomena of manner and speech, and devising situations which would call them out far more effectively. You see vividly that personage in the situation, and by a sort of inspiration it supplies new language and actions corresponding. It was thus that Mr. Dickens "worked out" Mrs. Gamp, whose oddities had no real existence, though he had seen something analogous in the hospital nurse. With me, having got my character, the character was certain to supply the story, which is only following the precedent of real life, where strange characters really bring about strange events.

The great mistake in novel-writing, as a writer only gradually discovers, is—confounding what you find you have a knack of doing well and with fluency, and as you fancy with telling effect, with what will be relished by the public. It is thus that "clever" dialogue, written *con spirito* and *con amore* fills many pages. But the question is, is it to the point? Does it help on the story, rouse attention, excite the reader? But in truth, a good story is all in all; and in this the untiring, never-flagging Miss Braddon is unapproachable. Many feel their strength lies in character and dialogue, but these without a story are worthless. You might as well issue essays in the style of the old *Spectator*. Nor is a good story so difficult to find, even by a person who has not the art of constructing stories. It is a wonderful fact, that the same outline of story

will furnish to different minds, not merely the idea of different treatment, but actually a different story in the result. This often becomes a most effective mode of supplying a want of originality. I myself often, in reading a powerful tale, have felt a sort of inspiration ; the whole fell into new situations and new characters offered. In real life, it will be seen how a particular situation would be modified or altered, according as different characters were concerned in it. Some would control the situation ; others would let the situation control *them*. One writer would be inclined to show—autobiographically, as it were—how the leading person was affected ; another would show the effect on him from a bystander's view. I have often, reading a French story, met with a situation which set me tracing backwards what might lead to such a situation, and forwards what might come from it, until a complete and novel story lay before me. But, as I said, a really good and striking character will of itself suggest a story, if it be bold and broad enough. I will give an illustration. Suppose that character of which Mr. Toole is so fond—a retired tradesman or merchant going into society, good-natured, sterling, and with a sensible disposition under the absurdities of his new situation. Give him a daughter on whom he doats. Immediately the story begins to crystallize. Let him marry her to a man of rank, the man of her heart, after many difficulties and opposition of his aristocratic parents. This with many might be the end of a story. But stay. It is in truth but the foundation. For see how many interesting and exciting elements *must* be at work to disturb and complicate !—the man of rank growing discontented, feeling he has lost caste ; his “taking it out,” as it is called, of his father-in-law ; the latter submitting

for a time for the sake of his daughter ; the wish of the aristocrat to recover his old position, by ignoring his new connections, in which is gradually included the wife ; the alienation of the latter ; the anger of the father then roused and unrestrained, because the only motive for restraint is removed ; his punishment of his son-in-law by a manly assertion of himself, and making the other feel the meanness of being supported by one whom he despises. It will be seen at once what capabilities of treatment are here opened up, stretching in many various directions. Half a dozen writers would treat this in half a dozen ways. And yet it is but a beginning. Here we have the foundation of "Our Boys," "Crutch and Toothpick," "Le Gendre de Monsieur Poirier." Sometimes you can get a whole story from a mere dramatic opening. Say that a railway accident has taken place at night near a retired country house. A lady has fainted, or is slightly injured, and is introduced to a pleasant family party—a widower gentleman and his two daughters, his son and his betrothed on a visit. The lady is of a good family, but going to be a governess. She stays a day—another day—a week ; fixes herself ; fascinates the young man, etc. Or another way. A marriage is to take place in a village church. The ceremony is about to commence, when the gentleman is fetched out, and returns saying it cannot be ; gives no explanation ; owns his heartlessness and cruelty. I have a book full of these crude hints, suggestions, names, and characters.

In many of Mr. Dickens's letters will be found admirable counsels to the novelist ; one special one—avoid painful and disagreeable endings. The public likes everything pleasant. In certain episodes, it is not a bad plan to let your characters

act for you; that is, plunge into the situation without considering the distinct issue, and trust that something effective will suggest itself spontaneously. Often something more brilliant is thus offered than anything you yourself could devise thoughtfully and laboriously. There is a curious passage in one of the Lives of Alfred de Musset, in which he speaks of the composition of his piece, "Les Caprices de Marianne." In this there is a debate between two persons, in which the woman presses the other with an extraordinary and vigorous repartee. On this the author confessed at the time that he was himself silenced, bewildered by the power of the being he had raised up, and whom he could not answer. Yet the play was destroyed, unless the victory was given to the other. "I myself," he said, "would in real life have been beaten by such a person." And by an immense mental exertion or inspiration, he found the proper and triumphant reply which gave his character the victory.

We may fairly speculate how far writing a particular passage would be affected by the circumstance that some one interrupts. You lay it aside to resume it next day. Would the result be the same? I fancy so, except under incidents of particular enthusiastic inspiration, such as carried Mr. Ainsworth through his "Turpin's Ride to York," written without interruption. This, however, can be tested fairly enough. Once, having mislaid a chapter, I had to rewrite it, and later, finding the missing document, discovered that both were nearly alike.

I have one favourite heroine that figures in six or seven of these stories—drawn from one favourite person. In the last of these I drew her career as I intended it, and my own as I intended it, bringing the two characters together at the close,

as is done in all novels ; and a few months later the same history came about in the case of the living personages.

As to publishers, here is the result of my experience. The most eminent, perhaps, have curiously and invariably preferred that arrangement of "sharing," or "half-profits," which consists in tendering the author the shells, while the firms in question swallow the oyster. I have had two transactions of the "sharing" kind, but these were in early salad days. The first was with an eminent firm who had taken two of my works—one a novel for which they had given a large price, the other a biographical work on "sharing" terms. But the biography had to help to pay them for the novel. The other transaction of the kind was with the worthy publisher of Catherine Street, my old friend and encourager, William Tinsley, who honestly and faithfully divided the profits, and on a not very successful work handed me some eighty pounds as my share. I may add that with this excellent man—and we have had innumerable transactions—I have never had a scrap of writing in the shape of an agreement. His word and my word were sufficient and made the bond. At the same time, it must be borne in mind that a publisher is entitled to charge you all things as they would be charged to him if he were not a publisher ; though, owing to his position and responsibilities, he obtains on printing, paper, and advertisements, discounts and other advantages, which you cannot enjoy.

All through this literary life nothing disagreeable has occurred to me, and no unhandsome treatment has been encountered, save in perhaps two or three instances. I have always met with the most scrupulous honesty in settlements ; and only

in the case of one or two obscure journals have I been what is called "done."

From various illustrated journals and magazines a woodcut often arrives, representing a young lady at a fancy ball, two children on a ghostly staircase, or something of the kind, with a request that I will illustrate *them*, instead of their illustrating *me*, by a story. This often taxes one's ingenuity sorely, as it will not do merely to bring in the scene in question, but it must be made of the essence of the story. This, however, is what is called "knack."

Thus omnivorous, it may be assumed that the stage was not likely to be overlooked. As a lesson in perseverance, it deserves to be recorded that I was fifteen years struggling to find entrance to that jealously walled-up preserve. Once, after years of effort, I succeeded in getting a piece accepted, but the management collapsed at the critical moment, and I had to begin again. For my first farce I received ten pounds; for my second, twenty; and for my grand drama, in which I had worked with a partner, one hundred pounds. But I hope yet to do considerably more in this direction.

A few guineas, I should say, would comprise all my receipts in the direction of verse-making. Distinctly I fear little or nothing is to be made in this way. Yet I console myself with the thought that many who have published volumes of poems have not made even that modest sum.

In addition to this pleasant and profitable life, there are many personal advantages. Your moderately successful author is often asked to sit for his photograph for some "series," and is, of course, never charged for it. In nine cases out of ten, an application to any of the London managers secures you a gratuitous stall. For years I have

been a constant playgoer on these easy terms. So that now, when on a rare occasion I have to pay for a stall, it seems to border on a cruel imposition, as though the money had been taken from me unfairly. Such is the force of habit.

A great mistake in the diplomacy of authors is to be too grasping. Men cannot resist a present advantage in hand, and so sacrifice what is in the bush. One work of mine—a truly monstrous one for its carelessness—failed utterly,—the only one that met such a fate. I was to have sixty pounds; the publisher was in despair, but I held his signed agreement. I nobly forbore, and tore my bond. But mark; when that was long forgotten, I repaired to him with another work. He was good enough to say I had behaved so handsomely that he was ready to treat on satisfactory terms for the new work. So I did not lose on the whole.

Publishers do not relish, any more than other people, losing money. As to “corrections” they are specially sore. I could tell a curious thing. I was once the author of a work in two volumes, numbering in all over a thousand pages, the corrections for which cost about as much as the original printing! The sums were, I think, one hundred and forty and one hundred and fifty pounds. Yet the generous publisher, before paying what he had covenanted to pay, said he thought it right to put it to me whether this style of “correcting” was not excessive? He good-naturedly mulcted me in only forty pounds, as my legitimate share of the cost.

As for the essays, sketches, descriptions, they are simply innumerable. It is agreeable work, and so lightly done. If you are sometimes extravagant to the tune of five pounds, you sit down for a morning (having found a subject in your last walk), and the debt is paid. Indeed, during these walks,

it is wonderful how agreeable profit for mind and purse can be made. Being ever of an artistic turn, I began, some time ago, to work out, as I walked along, principles of criticism as applied to the buildings, houses, etc., in the streets, and soon elaborated a pleasant series. Extending this idea, I began to think how many unnoticed curious things there were in the London streets, houses, doorways, etc., and this I worked out in a more elaborate series still. All this and more goes on with the greater labours, and used to represent with me from one hundred and fifty to two hundred pounds a year,—now not nearly so much. I put the sums from this source at about four thousand pounds. Adding all up, I should fix my total earnings at fifteen or twenty thousand pounds.

Such is the earthy financial view of the calling—"the seamy side," as some might think it—or the most satisfactory answer to the question, "Does writing pay?" But there is a yet larger view and a wider sense in the phrase: Does it pay in the sense of the enjoyment of the task, the new interests it creates—in the troops of friends and acquaintances it gathers? This is better worth inquiry.

CHAPTER III.

CHARLES DICKENS AS AN EDITOR.

THE figure of the amiable, accomplished, and ever-to-be-regretted Charles Dickens has been lately brought before us "even in his habit as he lived," with abundance of detail and colour. Mr. Forster's complete and admirable Biography, done with the taste and workmanlike finish of a true "man of

letters," will be more and more esteemed as the time from his death lengthens. Objection was indeed taken to the biographer accompanying his hero about as closely as Boswell did Johnson ; but this really brought before the world much that would otherwise have been lost or unseen ; and in the last volume, where the author seems to have accepted this criticism and to have become historical, there is a sensible loss of dramatic vividness. Lately the world has received the closing collection of his Letters, edited by Miss Hogarth and Miss Dickens, and set off with a graphic and most pleasing commentary whose only fault is that of being too short. Here his *gaieté de cœur*, his unflagging spirit, wit, and genial temper, are revealed in the most striking way.

There is, however, one view of him which has scarcely been sufficiently dealt with, namely, his relations with his literary brethren and friends, as editor and otherwise. These exhibit him in a most engaging light, and will perhaps be a surprise even to those abundantly familiar with his amiable and gracious ways.

In the old *Household Words* days, the "place of business" was at a charming miniature office in Wellington Street—close to the stage door of the Gaiety Theatre. It seemed all bow window ; at least, its two stories—it had only two—were thus bowed. The drawing-room floor seemed a sunshiny, cheerful place to work in. This is now the workshop of another magazine, the *Army and Navy*. But I always pass it with respect and affection. I never came away from it without taking with me something pleasing.

Often, about eleven o'clock, he was to be seen tramping briskly along the Strand, coming from Charing Cross Station, fresh from his pleasant

country place in Kent, keen and ready for the day's work, and carrying his little black bag full of proofs and manuscripts. That daily journey from Higham station, with the drive to it in his little carriage or Irish car, took full an hour each way, and was a serious slice out of his time. It has, indeed, seemed always a problem to me why business men, to whom moments are precious, should be thus prodigal in time devoted to travelling—coming from Brighton and returning at headlong speed. At Bedford Street, by the bootmaker's shop, he would turn out of the Strand—those in the shops he passed would know his figure well, and told me, after his death, how they missed this familiar apparition—would then post along in the same brisk stride through Maiden Lane, past "Rule's," where he often had his oyster, through Tavistock Street, till he emerged in Wellington Street, the last house he passed before crossing being "Major Pitt's," the hatter's. This mention of "Major Pitt" suggests that it was always pleasant to see what pride tradesmen took in having him for a customer, and what alacrity they showed in serving him or in obliging him in any way. This I believe was really owing to his charming hearty manner, ever courteous, cordial, and zealous; his cheery fashion of joking or jest, which was irresistible. The average tradesman has small sympathy or intelligence for the regular literary man. He is sometimes *caviare* indeed to him.

Our writer, however, was a serious personality of living flesh and blood, and would have made his way in life under any condition. His extraordinary charm of manner, never capriciously changed, the smile and laugh always ready—that sympathy, too, which rises before me, and was really unique—I can call no one to mind that

possessed it or possesses it now in the same degree. Literary men, as a rule, have a chilliness as regards their brethren ; every one is more or less working for his own hand. Yet, few men have had more anxious responsibilities or troubles to disturb them, or so much depending upon them, as he had in many ways. I believe the number of people who were always wanting "something done for them," either in the shape of actual money advance, or advice, or productions "to be taken," or to be seen, or to have their letters answered, or who desired letters from him in their interests, was perfectly incredible. Many a man takes refuge in a complete ignoring of these worries, which would require a life to attend to. An eminent and highly popular man of our own day, who is thus persecuted, has adopted this latter mode, and rarely takes notice of a letter from a friend or stranger, unless he is minded so to do. He is strictly in his right. You are no more bound to reply to persons that do not know you, than you are to acknowledge the attentions of an organ-grinder who plays for an hour before your window.

There were many little *Household Words* traditions. The "chief" himself always wrote with blue ink on blue paper. His was a singularly neat and regular hand, really artistic in its conception, legible—yet not very legible to those unfamiliar with it. Here, as in everything else, was to be noted the perfect *finish*, as it might be styled, of his letter-writing—the disposition of the paragraphs, even the stopping, the use of capitals, all showing artistic knowledge, and conveying excellent and valuable lessons. His "copy" for the printers, written as it is in very small hand, much crowded, is trying enough to the eyes, but the printers never found any difficulties. It was much

and carefully corrected, and wherever there was an erasure, it was done in thorough fashion, so that what was effaced could not be read. Nearly all the band followed his example in writing in blue ink and on blue paper, and this for many years; but not without inconvenience. For, like the boy and his button, described by Sir Walter Scott, the absence of paper or ink of the necessary colour affected the ideas, and one worked under serious disabilities—strangeness, etc. Another idiosyncrasy of his was writing the day of the month in full, as "January twenty-sixth."

It is in his relations with writers in his periodical, and, indeed, in all connections with his "literary brethren," as he modestly called them, that this amiable and engaging man appears to the most extraordinary advantage. As I read over his many letters on those points, I am amazed at the good-natured allowance, the untiring good humour, the wish to please and make pleasant, the almost deference, the modesty in one of his great position as head, perhaps, of all living writers—to say nothing of his position as director of the periodical which he kindled with his own perpetual inspirations. There was ever the same uniform good nature and ardour, the eagerness to welcome and second any plan, a reluctance to dismiss it, and this done with apologies; all, too, in the strangest contrast to the summary and plain-spoken fashion of the ordinary editor. I fancy this view has scarcely been sufficiently brought out in all the numerous estimates of this most charming of men. And, at the risk of some intrusion of my own concerns, I shall be enabled to show him in even a more engaging and attractive light. The various accounts have scarcely been concerned with this side of his character.

This patient interest should, in these editorial matters, be considered more wonderful when it is remembered that his position as head of an important periodical made him a marked figure for importunity. Many of his friends were tempted to become "literary." They even had *their* friends who desired to become literary, and under pressure would introduce to this great writer immature and unprofitable efforts, which he had to put aside with what excuses he could. Then there were his "literary brethren," each with his "novel" or short paper, which it would occur to him some morning "he would send off to Dickens." These had to be considered, and his good nature or courtesy drawn upon. As for the general herd of scribblers, the postman on "this beat" could give due account of the packages of manuscript that daily arrived. It was no wonder that he had to compose a sort of special circular answer, which was duly lithographed and returned with their productions to the various candidates. I believe every composition was seriously glanced at, and some estimate made—and many an obscure clever girl was surprised to find her efforts appreciated. The usual rejection form was as follows:—

"SIR,

"I am requested by Mr. Charles Dickens to express his regret that he cannot accept the contribution you have had the goodness to offer him for insertion in this periodical. So many manuscripts are forwarded to this office, that Mr. Dickens trusts it is only necessary to suggest to you the impossibility of its business being transacted if a special letter of explanation were addressed to every correspondent whose proffered aid is declined. But he wishes me to convey to



you the assurance,—firstly, that your favour has been honestly read, and secondly, that it is always no less a pleasure to him than it is his interest to avail himself of any contributions that are, in his judgment, suited to the requirements of *Household Words*."

The band of writers he assembled round him and inspired was certainly remarkable. There was Hollingshead, incisive, wonderful in collecting facts where abuses were concerned, and in putting his facts into vigorous, downright English. His strokes always told, and a little paper of his conceived in this spirit, entitled "The City of Unlimited Paper," a simple subject, was copied at length into the *Times*, and from the *Times* into other papers. There was Moy Thomas, now the pleasant writer of the Monday "Causeries" in the *Daily News*. There was Walter Thornbury, with his extraordinary knowledge of London antiquities and curious "out-of-the-way" reading, an explorer of old "wynds" and alleys, from "Booksellers' Row" to Red Lion Square; very dainty in his taste, as his quaint bookplate, designed for him by Mr. Marks, shows. He had great antiquarian knowledge, and yet, odd to say, a facile dramatic and unantiquarian style. There was also the amiable Charles Collins—our "Conductor's" son-in-law—a man of a quiet pleasant humour with a flavour of its own, and who was heartily liked by his friends. He had a remarkably sweet disposition, though sorely tried by perpetual ill health. His humour was stimulated by the companionship of his father-in-law, and took somewhat the same cast. For instance when he was appointed, during one of the great exhibitions, to the odd function—but that era of exhibitions engendered all sorts of fantastic

things—of making a collection of all the existing newspapers of the kingdom, the oddities that cropped up during this duty tickled his fancy and that of his friends hugely. He noted that the smaller and more obscure the place, the grander and more commanding was the title of its organ—witness *The Skibbereen Eagle*, a name that gave him much delight. Writing he delighted in, but, by a cruel fate, it was a labour, if of love, yet accompanied by something like torture. Every idea or sentence was wrung from him, as he said, like drops of blood. Neither ideas nor words would flow. His “Cruise upon Wheels,” a record of a journey along the French roads in a gig, is a most charming travel-book, in which his quaint humour is well shown. The late Andrew Halliday was another useful writer that could be depended on to gather hard facts, and set them out when gathered in vivacious style. He enjoyed a fixed substantial salary—think of that, ye occasional “contributors”—and I have seen him arrive in his hansom with his formal list of “subjects” for treatment, which were carefully gone through, debated, and selected. He afterwards made play-writing his regular vocation, but was cut off in his prime, like many a writer. There was Parkinson, and there was Professor Morley; above all, there was the always brilliant George Augustus Sala, perhaps the only writer in periodicals who writes a distinctly original style, with personality and unflagging vivacity. I have not space to dwell on his merits here, but I may at least confess to looking with a sort of wistful envy at his exquisite penmanship, that seems never to depart from one steady standard of excellence. The surprising neatness and clear picturesqueness of his calligraphy is the delight of compositors, as with humiliation I have to confess

that mine is their despair. Indeed, I may make a clean breast of it and further own that on one journal of enormous circulation the men demanded, and obtained, extra pay "for setting Mr. Fitzgerald's copy!" The old *Household Words*—a title infinitely superior to *All the Year Round*—has lately been revived by the old editor's son, a capable, energetic, and clever man, who has pushed his way with success. One of the old guild thus writes of the new venture in the *Daily News* :—

"One function of the original *Household Words*, as of its legitimate successor *All the Year Round*, has proved to be that of ushering in new claimants to a place in the world of literature and journalism. The great position enjoyed by Dickens in the literary world, his early and intimate connection with newspaper work as a man 'in the gallery,' and his genial and helpful nature, attracted a crowd of aspirants around him. He was immeasurably more infested than ever was Pope by 'frantic poetess' and 'rhyming peer,' and the 'parson much bemused with beer' was assuredly not wanting. Out of this crowd of claimants he chose his 'young men' with the skill of a born leader, and helped them on by tongue and pen, by shrewd counsel, and fierce 'cutting' of their articles. If he had any fault, it was the good nature which prevented him from crushing unhappy creatures, doubtless well fitted for every pursuit but that of letters, who were induced to persevere by his mistaken kindness, to their own ultimate sorrow and discomfiture. Some had written much or little before they came to him, but the fact remains that it was under his leadership that they achieved reputation. Beneath the banner upheld by Charles Dickens and his faithful friend, the late Mr. W. H. Wills, marched a bril-

liant array of writers, if not quite of the Titanic proportions of the early contributors to *Fraser's Magazine*, yet noteworthy by their brilliant success in the new periodical. Mr. Wilkie Collins had previously written fiction, but his most famous work, 'The Woman in White,' appeared in *Household Words*. The late Mr. Charles Collins was actually egged on by 'the chief' into writing his remarkable 'Eye-Witness' and other papers. Mr. Sala's 'Key of the Street' unlocked for him the avenue to his successful career; and Mr. Grenville Murray spread his wings as 'The Roving Englishman,' and made his mark by a fierce attack on the late Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, whom he satirized as 'Sir Hector Stubble.' Mr. Edmund Yates's best novel, 'Black Sheep,' and scores of his best articles, appeared in the journal 'conducted by Charles Dickens,' as did Lord Lytton's 'Strange Story;' as well as 'Hard Times,' 'Great Expectations,' the 'Uncommercial Traveller,' and a regiment of Christmas stories by the hand of the Master himself. Among the writers of poems and stories, short and long, essays and descriptions, are the well-known names of Harriet Martineau, Mrs. Gaskell, Peter Cunningham, Miss Jewsbury, John Forster, Albert Smith, James Hannay, and Mark Lemon."

The time when "the Christmas Number" had to be got ready was always one of pleasant expectancy and alacrity. It was an object for all to have a seat in "a vehicle" which travelled every road and reached the houses of a quarter of a million persons. With his usual conscientious feeling of duty to the public, he laboured hard, first, to secure a good and telling idea; and second, to work it out on the small but effective scale with which he had latterly grown unfamiliar, owing to his habit

of dealing with large canvases. Hence the labour was in proportion, and at last became so irksome that he gave the place up altogether, though it must have been a serious loss of profit. *Frappez vite et frappez fort*, was the system. I remember his saying, when complaining of this tax, "I have really put as much into *Mrs. Lirriper* as would almost make a novel." He himself generally supplied a framework and a couple of short stories, and the rest was filled in by "other hands." I have myself furnished two in a single number.

As the time drew near, a pleasantly welcome circular went forth to a few of the writers of the journal; the paragraphs of which, as they exhibit his lighter touches, will be welcome. They show, too, the matter-of-fact, business-like style in which the matter was conceived and carried out.

"In inviting you to contribute to our Christmas Number, I beg to send you Mr. Dickens's memorandum of the range that may be taken this year. You will see that it is a wide one.

"The slight leading notion of the Number being devised with a view to placing as little restriction as possible on the fancies of my fellow-writers in it, there is again no limitation as to scene or first person or third person; nor is any reference to the season of the year essential.

"It is to be observed that the tales are not supposed to be narrated to any audience, but are supposed to be in writing. How they come to be in writing *requires no accounting for whatever*. Nothing to which they refer can have happened within seven years. If any contribution should be of a kind that would derive any force or playfulness, or suggestiveness of any sort, from the pretence that it is incomplete—that the beginning is not there, or the end, or the middle, or any

other portion—the pretence will be quite consistent with the general idea of the Number.”

On another anniversary the circular ran :—

“Your tale may be narrated either in the first or in the third person—may be serious or droll—may be told by an individual of either sex, and of any station. It is not essential to lay the scene of action in England (though the tale is told in England), and no reference whatever to Christmas is desired.

“The tale is supposed to be related by word of mouth to a man who has retired from the world and shut himself up moodily, gloomily, and dirtily. Generally it should have some latent bearing by implication on the absurdity of such a proceeding—on the dependence of mankind on one another—and on the wholesome influences of the gregarious habits of humanity.”

A third was to this effect :—

“The tales may be in the first person or in the third, and may relate to any season or period. They may be supposed to be told to an audience or to the reader, or to be penned by the writer without knowing how they will come to light. How they come to be told at all does not require to be accounted for. If they could express some new resolution formed, some departure from an old idea or course that was not quite wholesome, it might be better for the general purpose. Yet even this is not indispensable.”

The following was more elaborate :—

“An English trading-ship (with passengers on board), bound for California, is supposed to have got foul of an iceberg, and becomes a wreck. The crew and passengers, not being very many in number, and the captain being a cool man with his wits about him, one of the boats was hoisted

out, and some stores were got over the side into her before the ship went down. Then all hands, with a few exceptions, were got into the boat—an open one—and they got clear of the wreck, and put their trust in God.

“The captain set the course and steered, and the rest rowed by spells when the sea was smooth enough for the use of the oars. They had a sail besides. At sea in the open boat for many days and nights, with the prospect before them of being swamped by any great wave, or perishing with hunger, the people in the boat began, after a while, to be horribly dispirited. The captain remembering that the narration of stories had been attended with great success on former occasions in similar disasters, in preventing the shipwrecked persons’ minds from dwelling on the horrors of their condition, proposed that such as could tell anything to the rest should tell it. So the stories are introduced.

“The adventures narrated need not of necessity have happened in all cases to the people in the boat themselves. Neither does it matter whether they are told in the first or in the third person. The whole narrative of the wreck will be given by the captain to the reader in introducing the stories, also the final deliverance of the people. There are persons of both sexes in the boat. The writer of any story may suppose any sort of person—or none, if that be all—as the captain will identify him if need be. But among the wrecked there might naturally be the mate, the cook, the carpenter, the armourer (or worker in iron), the boy, the bride passenger, the bridegroom passenger, the sister passenger, the brother passenger, the mother or father passenger, or son or daughter passenger, the runaway passenger, the child passenger, the old seaman, the toughest of the crew, etc., etc.”



This was the skeleton or ribs of "The Wreck of the *Golden Mary*," which had extraordinary success, though some critics were merry on the idea of the suffering passengers having to listen to such long narratives—one adding that he wondered that it did not precipitate the catastrophe.

Another was more general:—

"Mr. Dickens is desirous that each article in the new year's Number of *Household Words* shall have reference to something *new*, and I beg to ask you to assist us in producing a paper expressive of that always desirable quality.

"I can give you no better hint of the idea than the roughest notion of what one or two of the titles of the papers might be: A New Country; A New Discovery (in science, art, or social life); A New Lover; A New Play, or Actor, or Actress; A New Boy.

"Your own imagination will doubtless suggest a topic or a story which would harmonize with the plan."

Yet one more:—

"In order that you may be laid under as little constraint as possible, Mr. Dickens wishes to present the requirements of the Number, in the following general way:—

"A story of adventure—that is to say, involving some adventurous kind of interest—would be best adapted to the design. It may be a story of travel, or battle, or imprisonment, or escape, or shipwreck, or peril of any kind—peril from storm, or from being benighted or lost; or peril from fire or water. It may relate to sea or land. It may be incidental to the life of a soldier, sailor, fisherman, miner, grave-digger, engineer, explorer, pedlar, merchant, servant of either sex, or any sort of watcher—from a man in a lighthouse, or a coastguardsman, to an

ordinary night nurse. There is no necessary limitation as to the scene, whether abroad or at home; nor as to the time, within a hundred years. Nor is it important whether the story be narrated in the first person or in the third. Nor is there any objection to its being founded on some expedition."

In connection with this matter, I may say that nothing was more delightful than the unrestrained way in which he confided his plans about his own stories, or discussed others connected with mine, imparting quite a dramatic interest and colour to what might, as mere business details, have been left to his deputy.

Once, in a little town in Wales, I had seen a quaint local museum, formed by an old ship captain who had collected odds and ends of his profession, mostly worthless, much like what is described in "Little Pedlington." The oddest feature was the garden, in which he had planted various figure-heads of vessels, Dukes of York, Queen Charlottes, and others, who gazed on the visitors with an extraordinary stare, half ghastly, half grotesque. This seemed to furnish a hint for the machinery of one of the Christmas stories, and was suggested to him.

"That notion of the shipbreaker's garden," he wrote, November, 1865, "takes my fancy strongly. If I had not been already at work upon the Christmas Number when you suggested it, I think I must have tried my hand upon it. As it is, I often revert to it, and go about and about it, and pat it into new forms, much as the buttermen in the shops (who have something of a literary air at their wooden desks) pat the butter. I have been vexed at not being able to get your story into 'Doctor Marigold.' I tried it again and again, but could not adapt its length to the other require-

ments of the Number. Once I cut it, but was not easy afterwards, and thought it best to restore the excision and leave the whole for a regular Number. The difficulty of fitting and adapting this annual job is hardly to be imagined without trying it. For the rest, I hope you will like the Doctor—and know him at once—as he speaks for himself in the first paper and the last. Also I commend to your perusal a certain short story, headed ‘To be taken with a grain of salt.’

“I hope you are in force and spirits with your new story, and hope you noticed in the *Times* the other day that our friend —— is married.”

How amazing this modesty, and these excuses for not using what another would have simply said he found “unsuited to the magazine.”

As I look over the records of his interest in my undeserving scribblings, there comes, mingled with pain and regret for this genial, never-flagging friend, something of a little pride in having gained the interest of so true and genuine a nature. It will be seen how he encouraged—how even grateful he appeared to be for anything he thought good or successful, and how patient and apologetic he was under circumstances where his good will and good nature were tried. It was so for a long period of years ; he was the same from beginning to end ; no caprice ; steady, firm, *treu und fest*. Carlyle, in a single line, gave the truest estimate of him.

Another trait in him was his unfailing pleasure in communicating some little composition with which he was particularly pleased ; or he would tell of some remarkable story that he had been sent, or would send one of his own which he fancied hugely. It was a source, too, of pleasant, welcome surprise to find how he retained in his memory,

and would quote, various and sundry of one's own humbler efforts—those that had passed into his own stock associations. These generally referred to some experience or humorous adventure, or it might be some account of a dog.

After two or three years of industrious practice in short stories and essays, I had fancied I could succeed in novel-writing with a first attempt, and timidly suggested that I might "try my hand" in his weekly journal. He at once agreed, and good-naturedly had about half a volume "set up," so as to give the production every chance in the reading. But the attempt was immature; the waxen wings melted, and he was obliged to decline it. By-and-by I got a new pair, and, making a more formal attempt in two volumes, was lucky enough to make a success.

The history of this little transaction will be found interesting, not, of course, from my own share, but as illustrating that charm of hearty good will which marked every act of his where his friends were concerned. Here also enters on the scene his faithful coadjutor and assistant, W. H. Wills; a sterling character, practical, business-like, and yet never letting his naturally friendly temper be overcome by the stern necessities of his office. He had a vast amount of business, as may be conceived; yet his letters, of which I have some hundreds before me now, were always playful, amusing, clever, and written in a flowing lengthy style—even to "crossing." His sagacity was heartily appreciated by his chief. He ever appeared a most favourable specimen of the successful literary man.

At the risk of becoming more personal, I may enter a little at length on the subject of what Lamb calls the "kindly engendure" of this story

—which, in truth, has some flavour of the romance of authorship. I had sent my successful two-volume venture to my friend.

“MY DEAR FITZGERALD,

“Do not condemn me unheard (I know you are putting on the black cap). I have been silent, but only on paper; for a fortnight after you last heard from me I was roaring with pain. The first use of my convalescence was to read your story—like a steam-engine. My impression is that it is the best novel I have read for years; why I think so I need not tell you. I posted off with it to Dickens, whose impression of it results in this: that we should like you to write a novel for *All the Year Round*. If you respond to that wish, it will afford me very great pleasure.

“In that case, it would be very necessary for you to begin at once; for should you make a hit with your plot, we would require to publish the first instalment in September next. The *modus operandi* I propose is this: let us have a rough sketch of your plot and characters; Dickens would consider it, offer you suggestions for improvement if he saw fit, or condemn it, or accept it as you present it if he saw no ground for remark. In case of a negative you would not mind, perhaps, trying another programme. I need not tell you how great an advantage it would be for you to work under so great a master of the art which your novel shows you to know the difficulties of, and your artistic sympathies will, I know, prompt you to take full advantage of hints which he would give you, not only in the construction and conduct of your story, but in details, as you proceed with it in weekly portions.

“Experience has shown us that the preappear-

ance of a novel in our pages, instead of occupying the field for after-publication in volumes, gives an enormous stimulus to the issue in a complete form. We can therefore insure you for your work, if it will fill three volumes, five hundred pounds (£500), part of which we would pay for our use of your manuscript, and part the publisher of the volumes would pay; but we would, in case of acceptance, guarantee you £500, whatever the republication may fetch.

"Think this over, and when your thoughts are matured, let me have them in your next letter."

This was almost thrilling to read. Every word was as inspiring as the blast of a trumpet. It will be noted how pleased the writer is at the very communication of his intelligence. And then the *pécune*! Five hundred pounds! The diligent magazine-writer might exclaim with one of Jerrold's characters, "Is there so much money in the world!" It was really liberal and generous.

No time was lost in setting to work. I had soon blocked out a plan—what dramatists call a *scenario*—and had, about as soon, set to work and written a good many chapters and sent them in.

It will now be characteristic to see what pains were taken—how heads were laid together to improve and make good—all under the master's directions and inspirations, who, as he said often, always gave to the public his best labour and best work. This constancy always seemed to me wonderful. He never grew fagged or careless, or allowed his work to be distasteful to him. This is a most natural feeling, and comes with success; and there is a tendency to "scamp" work when the necessity for work is less. Mr. Thackeray confessed to this sense—in the days when he became



48. *RECREATIONS OF A LITERARY MAN.*

recherché—and found a sort of distaste to his work almost impossible to surmount.

The first questions started on this great business came from my old friend the sub-editor, the master's excellent auxiliary. It will be seen how staunch he was, and true to both interests—that of his journal and that of the writer.

"I am nearly as anxious as you are about your story. I may tell you that my judgment is in favour of it, so far as it has gone; but Dickens, while never wholly losing sight of the main end, object, and purpose of the story, often condemns one because its details are ill done. He takes such infinite pains with the smallest touches of his *own* word-pictures, that he gets impatient and disgusted with repetitions of bad writing and carelessness (often showing want of respect for, as well as ignorance of, the commonest principles of art). I, perhaps, sin too much on the other side. I say that the *general* public—whom we address in our large circulation—are rather insensible than otherwise to literary grace and correctness; that they are often intensely excited by incidents conveyed to their minds in the worst grammar.

"Mind, I only make these remarks for your guidance. My advice to you is, write for all your proofs, go over them very carefully. Take out as many Carlyleisms as you can see (your writing abounds with them), make clear that which is here and there obscure without a reader's consideration and retracing of the text—a labour which novel-readers especially hate; in short, put as high a polish on your details as you can, and I may almost *promise* you success. Dickens is vagabondizing at present, and won't be back for ten days; get all ready by that time.

"It is not impossible that we may have to call

upon you suddenly to let us commence the story in a week or two; but it may be deferred for a year. At all events, I can promise you a decision on all points when C. D. shows up.

"I find a fault in your other novel which is creeping into Miss ——'s: a want of earnestness; a Thackerayish pretence of indifference, which you do not feel, to the stronger emotions and statements of your characters. If you excite the emotions of your readers, and convey the idea that *you* feel a lofty contempt for emotion in general, *they* feel sold, and will hate your want of taking them in.

"I don't say a word in praise of your new venture, though I think a great deal. I want you and your writing to make a hit, not only with C. D. but with the public; and what I have said (which will make you detest me, at least till after church-time on Sunday) *may* be a small contribution towards that object, which I do most earnestly desire. About Monday, when your heart is open to forgiveness of sins like mine (or before it prove less obdurate), let me hear from you.

"One other thing. You see Sala's story lies chiefly in Paris. Could you not adopt my suggestion of giving your story its natural progression, and postponing chapter the first to its natural place in the story? My conviction is that you would make an improvement thereby in all respects."

After many debates, it was at last determined to attempt the venture.

"Next let me convey to you the intelligence," wrote our chief, "that I resolve to launch it, fully confiding in your conviction of the power of the story? On all business points Wills will communicate with you.

"The only suggestion I have to make as to the MS. in hand and type is that Fermor wants relief. It is a disagreeable character, as you mean it to be, and I should be afraid to do so much with him, if the case were mine, without taking the taste of him here and there out of the reader's mouth. It is remarkable that, if you do not administer a disagreeable character carefully, the public have a decided tendency to think that the *story* is disagreeable, and not merely the fictitious person.

"What do you think of this title, 'Never Forgotten?' It is a good one in itself, and would express the eldest sister's pursuit, and, glanced at now and then in the text, would hold the reader in suspense. Let me know your opinion as to the title. I need not assure you that the greatest care will be taken of you here, and that we shall make you as thoroughly well and widely known as we possibly can."

Now, this was all encouraging and cordial to a degree. Yet, I seem to see the editor here, more or less; and friendly and good-natured as these assurances were, in the case of an acquiescence, it will be seen what a difference there was in his tone as time went on, and he was good enough to have a "liking," as it is called, for the writer; even the slightly authoritative air that is here disappeared. I frankly confess that, having met innumerable men, and having had dealings with innumerable men, I never met one with an approach to his genuine, unaffected, unchanging kindness, or one that ever found so sunshiny a pleasure in doing one a kindness. I cannot call to mind that any request I ever made to him was ungranted, or left without an attempt to grant it.

The letter just quoted conveys a most precious

lesson to the novel-writer—whose craft, indeed, requires many lessons. Having written nearly twenty novels myself, I may speak with a little experience, and frankly own that it was not till I had passed my dozenth that I began to learn some few principles of the art ; having written, as so many do, “as the spirit moved,” or by fancied inspiration.

The allusion to the “bold advertisement” was, indeed, handsomely carried out. Few would have such advantages of publicity as one writing a novel for *All the Year Round* in those days. There was the *prestige* of association with the master, while the condition in which your work was brought before the public was truly effective.

All this happily settled, the affair was duly announced. No expense was spared. Vivid yellow posters, six or seven feet long, proclaimed the name of the new story in black brilliant characters on every blank wall and hoarding in the kingdom ; while smaller and more convenient-sized proclamations, in quarto as it were, told this tale in a more modest way. So that, if there was really any light at all, it was not under a bushel. I had a pride in, and fondness for, these testimonials, and have religiously preserved all that dealt with my own efforts, a kind of literature, as may be conceived, of a bulky sort, and filling great space as they accumulated. When debating effectual titles for these and other writings, I recall his taking me to his room without telling me what he had selected, and, by way of test or surprise, exhibiting one of these gigantic proclamations stretched at full length across the floor of the room. “What do you think ?” he would ask. “You must know,” he would add, his eye beginning to twinkle with merriment, “that when Wills corrects the proofs

of these things, he has to go on his knees, with a brush and pot of paint beside him?" The cost of this system of advertising was enormous in the year, but everything was done magnificently at "the office."

A little later I was informed that—

"The next Number we make up will contain the first part of your story. I like what you have done extremely. But I think the story flags at ——'s 'chaff.' There is too much of it. A few pregnant hits at —— would do all you want better. Again, the C—— party requires, I think, the exciseman up to the quadrille, where the real business of the evening begins. You see, in publishing hebdomadally, any kind of alternation is very dangerous. One must hit, not only hard, but quick.

"Please look well to the passage revealing the acceptance of F—— T——, and overthrow of V——, in the bedroom, after the party. This is a strong situation, and, to my mind, is confusedly expressed—in fact, can only be vaguely guessed at by the reader.

"More criticism! Everything goes on well so far; but I tell you what we all yearn for—some show of *tenderness* from somebody: the little glimpse of B——, a Number or two ago, with his little touch of humour-feeling, was refreshing in the highest degree. The characters seem to be all playing at chess—uncommonly well, mind you—but they neither do nor say anything sympathetic."

As the story advanced the councils multiplied, as well as the suggestions and improvements. Experiments even were made in particular directions, and an episode was furnished "to see how it would look in print;" sheets being "set up" in this way regardless of cost, and dismissed as unsatisfactory.

All this was laborious and troublesome, but, as was said, the experiment was worth making, and few sensible writers but would have welcomed the opportunity of learning their craft under such a teacher. It would be impossible to describe the fertility of his resources, the ingenuity exhibited, the pains and thought he gave to the matter. Under such auspices—and it was admitted that I was a willing pupil, with equal readiness to adopt and to carry out all that was suggested—the work benefited, it need hardly be said.

“Is it worth your while,” wrote my sub-editor, “to be bothered with a second scrawl merely to let me say how admirable I think it? Tender, true, and too pathetic even for an old hack waiting for his dinner to read with dry eyes. My first mouthful would have choked me if I had not written this.”

The end gained was satisfactory to all concerned. The work was successful, passed through several editions, and still sells. The copyright was disposed of for a sum nearly equal to what was allotted to me. Indeed, before it was concluded, the following pleasant communication, as full of sensible advice as it was agreeable, set me to work again. One curious evidence of its success was the fact that a firm of perfumers in Bond Street named a new perfume after the story, which is largely sold to this hour.

“Io Pæan! I congratulate you on being at last able to flourish the word *Finis*. I have not yet read a line of your ending, and this omission will give you a better relish for what I am going to say: dictated solely by the ‘merits’ already developed, Dickens’s answer to the wish you express at the end of your letter was a glad and eager ‘Yes;’ in which I heartily and cordially concurred, as you may guess. Let your next novel

be for us. We shall want it in from twelve to eighteen months' time ; and, if I may venture some advice, let me urge upon you to employ at least a quarter of it in constructing the skeleton of it from the end of your story, or modifying any little detail in the beginning of it—if you would set yourself the task of at least seeing land before you plunge into your voyage with no chance of veering, or 'backing or filling,' or shortening sail.

"I am sure you have a great chance before you, if you will only give your powers their full swing ; especially if you will let us see a *leetle* of the good side of human nature.

"Ever very faithfully yours,
"W. H. W."

I have many proof-sheets by me, corrected by his own hand in the most painstaking and elaborate way. The way he used to scatter his bright touches over the whole, the sparkling word of his own that he would insert here and there, gave a surprising point and light. The finish, too, that he imparted was wonderful ; and the "dashes," stops, shiftings, omissions, were all valuable lessons for writers.

On another occasion, when he did not "see," as he says, the point of another attempt—and, indeed, there was not much—he excuses himself in this fashion for not using it :

"Don't hate me more than you can help, when I say I have been reading 'Sixpenny Shakespeare,' and that I don't *see* it. I don't think this joke is worth the great ingenuity, and I don't think the public would take it. 'Wills and Will-making' most excellent. I have placed it in two parts already. It is capital. Once again, don't hate me more than you can help, and your

Petitioner will ever pray. (I don't know what
Petitioners pray for.)

“Ever yours,
“C. D.”

So also, when an unhappy monkey, trained to ride in a circus, offered a tempting subject for a paper which I had sent to him, he answers in the same spirit :

“I am afraid the monkey is anticipated. It has been exceedingly well done by Buckland in *Land and Water*, and would be the day after the fair. I was going to place him to-day, but in the mean time caught sight of Buckland's paper, which has been extensively copied both in weekly and country journals.”

Indeed, the pleasant ardour with which he followed the course of a story, anticipated its coming, debated its name, and helped its writer over various stiles, and even extricated him from bogs, was all in the same spirit. His aid as to the name and conduct of the story was, it may be conceived, invaluable. Many and earnest were the consultations upon this matter of naming. No one had a nicer ear as to what would “hit” or suit the taste of the town.

“I am glad to hear that the story is so far advanced now that you think well of it, for I have no doubt that you are right. I don't like either of your names, for the reason that they don't seem to me solidly earnest enough for such a story. But give me a little time to think of another, and I flatter myself that I may suggest a good one.”

And again :

“I think the plan of the story very promising, and suggestive of a remarkably good, new, and strong interest. What do you think of the pursuing

relative dying at last *of the same disorder as the baronet's daughter*, and under such circumstances as to make out the case of the clergyman's daughter and clear up the story? As, for example, *suppose her husband himself does almost the same thing in going for help when the man is dying*. I think I see a fine story here. As to the name. No, certainly not. 'What could She do?' No again. 'What will He do with It?' 'Can He forgive Her?' 'Put Yourself in His Place.' Remember these titles."

And again :

July, 1868.

"O where! O where! is the rest of "Tom Butler"? A hasty word. I prefer — (without the article). I cannot possibly answer the question Mr. — does me the honour to propose, without knowing what length of story is meant.

"I answer your letter to myself. It is perfectly understood between us that you write the long serial story next after —. That is a positive engagement. When I told — to write to you respecting a shorter story meanwhile, I meant that to be quite apart from, and over and above, the aforesaid long one. May I look at the chapters you speak of on Decoration?

"I am in a brilliant condition, thank God. Rest, and a little care immediately, *unshook* the Railway shaking.

"I don't quite understand from your kind note (forwarded here this morning) whether — purposes to write these papers or whether he suggests them to you. In either case, I shall be delighted to have them. It is necessary that they should appear under separate headings, each with its own title, as we have already three running titles. Your story — is going on famously, and I think will

make a hit. I had a letter from Wilkie Collins yesterday, much interested in perceiving your idea, and in following your working of it out. We purpose being in town on Thursday, and going on that afternoon. I hope we shall find you in readiness to go along with us."

"Your hint that you are getting on with your story, and liked it, was more than golden intelligence to me in foreign parts. The intensity of the heat in Paris and in the Provinces was such that I found else so refreshing in the course of my rambles.

"Make yourself quite easy. There is not the slightest need to hurry, and you can take your own time. I have a story in two parts still to place in Numbers not yet made up. Until Wednesday, and always.

So again :

"It strikes me that a quaintly expressive title for such a book would be 'The ——.' What do you think of it?"

The "eminent literary personage," as he called him, had now other ambitions—trying his hand at a short dramatic piece. He took charge of it, and sent it to his friend Webster. As it did not suit—others did, in due time—he good-naturedly broke the fall with the following:—

"The play goes very glibly, and merrily, and smoothly, but I make so bold as to say you can write a much better one. The most characteristic part in it is much too like Compton in 'The Unequal Match.' And the best scene in it, where he urges his wife to go away, is so excessively dangerous, that I think the chances would be very many to one against an audience's acceptance of it. Because, however drolly the situation is presented, the fact is not to be got over that the lady seriously

supposes her husband to be in league with another man."

With some humiliation I must own to trying the tolerance of this most amiable of men with various failures and sad carelessness on many occasions. His printer would grumble at the perfunctory style in which the copy was presented, and even in print it was sometimes difficult to put matters in shape.

"My difficulty," he wrote, "about your story has been a report from the Printer that the copy of some part of another story had got mixed with it, and it was impossible to make sense. You were then just gone. I waited until you should have leisure—now that I hear from you, I tell you only I have waited—and ask: *Is* the story made straight, and *is* it at the Printer's? Reply, reply, reply, as Bishop's duett says. Reply also to this: How long is it?"

"Waited until you should have leisure!" There was almost unlimited indulgence in the matter of changing and revising printed pages, condemned at the author's suggestion—new bits introduced here and there. He had a pleasant joke in this trying behaviour, and vowed that I had introduced a new term in the printing-house "chapel," a thing unknown for centuries in that most conservative of professions. These introduced columns and half-columns had to be denominated, somehow to distinguish them from the regular narrative. A number being brought by the foreman one day, and in his asking what this was, he was told that they were my "*Randoms*." The delight he felt in this seemed to compensate for any annoyance. I see the exuberant twinkle in his bright eye, and his hearty relish. I believe to this hour the term obtains. At last, however, his patience would give way.

"For my sake, if not for Heaven's," he would write, "do, I entreat you, look at this manuscript before I send it to the printer. And again, please keep on abrupt transitions into the present tense your critical eye. 'Tom Butler,' in type, is just brought in. I will write to you of him to-morrow or Sunday."

How gentle was this!

Once, however, and only once, he delivered himself with a severity that I own was deserved. Two novels were being actually written by "my facile pen" at the same moment, much as a barebacked rider, or rider of barebacked steeds, would ride the same number of horses round the circus. At the same time we were preparing for a long serial in his journal. "You make me very uneasy," he began, "on the subject of your new story here by undertaking such an impossible amount of fiction at one time."

How easily propitiated he was will be seen when, on a mere undertaking to be careful, he writes that—"Your explanation is (as it would be, *being yours*) manly and honest, and I am both satisfied and hopeful." Nay, some weeks later, he recurred to the matter in this strain:

"I am very sorry I was not at home. It gives me the greatest pleasure to receive such good tidings of the new story, and I shall enter upon its perusal in proof with the brightest appreciation. Will you send as much of it as you can spare to the office?"

Thus much for Charles Dickens in the editor's chair.

CHAPTER IV.

CHARLES DICKENS AT HOME.

A FEW further recollections of this most interesting of men, changing the scene to his home and fireside circle, will be received with welcome. It will have been seen that I knew him very intimately. I saw much of him; indeed, I may feel a sort of pride in saying he had a particular friendship for me, and showed it in many substantial ways.

I will first try to recall what he was like. There never was a man so unlike a professional writer: of tall, wiry, energetic figure; brisk in movement; a head well set on; a face rather bronzed or sunburnt; keen, bright, searching eyes, and a mouth which was full of expression, though hidden behind a wiry moustache and grizzled beard. Thus the French painter's remark that "he was more like one of the old Dutch admirals we see in the picture galleries, than a man of letters," conveyed an admirably true idea to his friends.

He had, indeed, much of the quiet resolute manner of command of a captain of a ship. He strode along briskly as he walked; as he listened his searching eye rested on you, and the nerves in his face quivered, much like those in the delicately formed nostrils of a finely bred dog. There was a curl or two in his hair at each side which was characteristic; and the jaunty way he wore his little morning hat, rather on one side, added to the effect. But when there was anything droll suggested, a delightful sparkle of lurking humour began to kindle and spread to his mouth, so that,

even before he uttered anything, you felt that something irresistibly droll was at hand. No one ever told a story so drolly, and, what is not so common, relished another man's story so heartily. A man of his great reputation and position might have chosen what company he pleased, and would have been welcome in the highest circles; but he never was so happy as with one or two intimate friends who understood him, who were in good spirits or in good humour. He was always grateful, as it were, to hear a good thing.

Gad's Hill, on the Rochester road, has been often described. It is a snug old red-brick house—quaint, too—with a belfry in the roof; a little lawn in front; a cosy porch and bow windows. It was old-fashioned and snug, and yet modern and modernized—as the great plate-glass windows set in the sound old brickwork seem to evidence. The country about was charming: spreading out pleasantly, well furnished, dotted here and there with little patches of red, other houses, as snug, upon hills or in dells. Nothing was more agreeable than a “run down” for a few days, or even from Saturday till Monday, arranged at “the office” in a hearty cheery style there was no resisting. Even here, his accurate, business-like mode would be shown; the hour and train fixed, or a leaf torn from his little book and the memorandum written down for guidance. His day was mapped out; there was haste but no scramble. Then came the meeting at Charing Cross Station, he posting up in good time. It was pleasant to note the deep respect of the guards—much more than a conventional greeting to a familiar passenger of importance.

I do not recall anything more delightful than one of these holidays. There is something in the

Kentish country—land of hop-poles and lanes—that in the summer time has the most pleasing associations. The basket carriage or car waited at Higham; the old village church, the road to Gad's Hill, all had a special charm. The Medway, Rochester, Chatham, all these opening out, are ever associated with him. This tract of country always seems to be painted in two colours: warm brick, mellow red tiles or shingle roof, and a deep green, as rich and mellow; add to this a third tint, the chill greys of the strangely bending river which attend you side by side almost all the way. Nearly opposite his gate was the old Falstaff Inn so often described.

Bestowed here, in this charming circle, with the pleasant gardens and flowers, the little croquet-ground—a recent acquisition—each day went by like an hour. I seem to see him now, lying on the grass, enjoying its calm, or standing about in his resolute fashion and attitude. I recall one Sunday, sultry even during the early hours, when I started off on a walk before breakfast. I fancy that I may quote a little description, written by myself, in his own journal:

“The scene is a charming bit of double colour, red brick and green sward on an English high-road, or rather, in these railway times, green lane, with an old tree or two, and a belfry in the roof; and from this I start on a *very* bright Sunday morning, making for a semi-military, semi-nautical settlement some miles away. I have never seen the nautico-military settlement, and do not know the road, so the whole has a prospect of adventure. Adventure there was to be none; but the reader will understand how pleasantly one turns back, for reasons unmeaning as compared with the incidents of other days, to little pictures of this sort.

The green lane went up and down, became a high-road, encountering with gigs and a stray waggon and a yellow van—there was to be a race or a fair somewhere on the Monday—with a two-wheeled show-cart of meaner pretensions; the proprietor of which walked by his vehicle in a Sunday cloak made out of the gaudy and dappled oilcloth which served on profane occasions as his roulette board. There was distinctly the blue and the red, and the less fortunate black, and the all lucky crown, most gorgeous in its yellow, displayed upon the proprietor's back.

“Next, I met ‘tidy’ women, very smart, and their lords in very roomy royal blue dress-coats and brass buttons, and those extra-short double-breasted waistcoats which honest but sorely tempted children of the soil always wear in melodramas. These were distinctly *not* going to church; and I could pardon them for turning aside to the rustic inn, to which you mounted by steps, which had two bow-windows with diamond panes and plenty of flowers, and a sign well on the road, and called the Jolly Waggoner. If it were a little later, I should myself have liked to go up and make the acquaintance of the Jolly Waggoner and his ale. After three or four miles, during which the sun was growing a little strong, and the dust perhaps rather acrimonious in its visits to the eyes, the great river and bridge came in sight. And there, while the spectator leaned on the bridge and looked in every direction, was a view that might sanctify any Sunday morning. A great full river, with that most satisfactory *brimming* fulness which recalled the Rhine, and a noble bridge of many arches, hill-shaped according to the old pattern, and whose piers seemed to stand firmly and confidently in the water and to defy any winter's flood, as if they

were great granite calves of legs belonging to a many-legged granite giant, who could stride up or down the river with ease. At the opposite side was the little old town, and the little old town's ruined castle rising solemnly on the hill, and the little old town's houses very much crowded, and forced down to the edge of the water. And then beyond the little old town was the nautico-military town, which climbed up a hill laid out in ancient 'lines' and more ancient fosses; and beyond the hill, down far below, the river had got in again and was wading under that Sunday's sun, glittering and glistening very far below, with the dockyards at its edge and the great ship-building sheds—monster coach-houses, but which now looked like tiny mousetraps. A charming view until modern man stepped in to spoil all, or rather the cruel, rapacious, and ubiquitous London, At'em, and Dashover Railway, running amuck through the country, hurled a heavy iron trough across the pretty river, and side by side of the pretty bridge. As I looked at its raw lines with disgust, and at its endless rivets, and heard it reverberating and clanging with a passing train, I seemed to hear it say, like an ugly bully, 'I've as much right to be here as *you*. I can go beside *you*, if I like, or *over* you, or go anywhere I like!'

"Still pressing on, I entered the little old town, which is all a snake-shaped street, with old rusty inns, and old posting-yards, and a few old framed houses; their old bones and joints well looked to and kept as fresh as paint could keep them. I liked the way they projected over and covered the pathway, and I liked their gables still more. I went out into the road to have a good stare: to the amazement of the family, who were reading their Bibles on a Sunday morning, and thought the

profane stranger might be better employed. Everything looked as bright and clean as a Dutch town, even to the one policeman, who, having little to do, began an affable conversation. Taking another bend, the little old town showed me some genuine red-brick houses with yellow stone corners and high French roofs—little Kensingtons, with a delightful old clock that hung out over the street in a mass of florid carving. Behind was a niche, and a flamboyant statue of a naval officer in a wig and gauntlets, pointing, I *know*, to the French—the brave old admiral Sir Cloudesley, in whose honour the red-brick tenement had been reared. Further on was a famous almshouse where Six Poor Travellers get their lodging and fourpences, and which looked snug and clean enough to make one *wish* to be a poor traveller; and further on again was an unmistakable edifice, in good repair, with a portico and pillars, and some little dwindled bills on the walls by which I was glad to see that the Theatre Royal was in play. Approaching and reading with interest—the commonest booth of a theatre has ever a fascination for me—(much to the disgust of a sour middle-aged lady with her husband and boy, who was making uncharitable sabbatarian remarks), I find that MR. GEORGE JENBY, the eminent character actor and vocalist, would ‘give two nights’ in this

“HIS NATIVE TOWN.

“He was to be assisted by

MISS MARION JENBY, of the London Concerts; by

MISS SUSAN JENBY, of the London and Ealing Concerts; by

MR. WILLIAM JENBY, on ‘this occasion only,’ who was of no concerts at all; and by

THE INFANT MARIE JENBY.

"The programme was 'rich and varied,' including Miss Marion Jenby in her great character song of the 'Battle of the Alma,' subdivided into 'The Advance, Charge of the Heavy Brigade! Quick step, they run! Prodigies of Valour! The Naval Brigade; England's Wooden Walls;' the two latter headings I suspected to be specially introduced as adroit compliments to the dockyards. Wished Jenby and his family all success, being really worked into sympathy by a quotation concerning 'coming home at last,' with which William Jenby ended his bill—

As the hare whom hounds and horse pursue
Pants to the spot from which at first it flew.

"But I passed on, and began to meet soldiers. Then I heard sounds of an organ coming out of a pretty little building, and found my middle-aged lady, her husband and boy, peeping in at the door with disgust and alarm. For, doing the same, I find this to be a chapel full of Irish soldiers, which having a stained-glass window looked very tranquil and cool and inviting on that Sunday morning. But if I were to tell all I saw on that pleasant Sunday morning, I should grow tedious—and so I stop here."

He was particularly delighted with that quotation of the actor's, likening himself to the "hare whom hounds and horse pursue." Never, indeed, was there a more appreciative listener, or one that welcomed a story more cordially. Many a walk we took along those Kentish lanes in sun and snow. He once "showed" Rochester Castle to me—a subject he knew by heart, and most interesting it was to hear him on this subject, as well as on all Rochester and Chatham curiosities.

Sometimes he held little festivals in a field



attached to the house—a recent purchase, of which he was rather proud, and which he humorously styled “his estate.” I recall a cricket match here —“the Higham Eleven” against some other competitors, and which drew an attendance of villagers and others. He treated it with a grave solemnity that was amusing, and enjoyed the proceedings heartily. There was the “umpire’s marquee” pitched, chairs arranged, flags flying. We even got up a sort of eager enthusiasm. Our host himself officiated as marker. I see him in his white jean coat, and his grey hat set a little on one side, his double glasses on, going conscientiously through his work; scoring down “byes,” and “overs,” and runs; at times cheering some indifferent “hit” with an encouraging “Well run! well run!” This he kept up the whole day. He was partial to marking. There were plenty of cooling drinks on the ground, a cask of beer for the crowd, and some wonderful cup, for which he had some special receipt—as he had for everything else. I remembered this too seductive drink to my cost next morning, for the day was oppressively hot, and every one was athirst.

One Christmas time, when he was preparing some new Readings, he devised a pleasant entertainment for his neighbours and guests, in the shape of a sort of rehearsal, or experiment with, I think, “Barbox Brothers” and “Mugby Junction.” The snow was very deep, and it was not the night for distant journeys, but all within “a measurable distance” assembled. His house was overflowing at the time, and numbers were billeted away with much ingenuity. Among them was Mr. Otway, and other Chatham notabilities. Even the dinner tables had to develop into side tables, but all was jovial and merry. After dinner his desk was arranged, and he read; but I fancy he was not

so pleased with "Barbox Brothers" as with his other public performances. After dinner we had small plays, one in which he exhibited singular cleverness, viz. that of guessing a subject fixed on when he was out of the room, in half a dozen questions. I have often seen this performed, but never in so masterly a style, for it is a test of character, and proves a power of getting at the essence of things. His selection of subjects to puzzle others when their turn came was characteristically ingenious—"The Lantern in a Railway Guard's Hand;" "The Powder used in the Gunpowder Plot" (we got as far as "Guy Fawkes," but no farther). He told how he piqued himself on a former occasion on a great triumph—the discovery of a regular poser: "The Boot on the off leg of a Postilion."

I have by me a little programme of another of these festivals. It runs thus:—

45th Kentish Royal Volunteers.
Annual Sports, September 28th.

1st Race.

Scramble stakes. 300 yards. 1st Prize, Electro-plated Cup and Stand.
2nd Prize, a Cigar Case.

2nd Race.

200 yards. 1st Prize, a Gold Pencil Case. 2nd Prize, a Penknife.

3rd Race.

80 yards. Three-legged Race. 1st Prize, a Handsome Walking-Stick.
2nd Prize, Cigars.

4th Race.

A Quarter Mile (Walking). 1st Prize, "Pickwick Papers," by Charles Dickens. 2nd Prize, a new Drill Book.

These sports were held on "the estate." He gave some of the prizes, and I think it was on this occasion that his friend Mr. Layard assisted heartily in keeping the course.

A great attraction of Gad's Hill were the dogs. There were always three or four great dogs

prancing about—Linda one was named—great St. Bernard dogs and others. He appreciated dogs, and understood their ways and fine nature better than any one, as we see from his writings. I recollect his sort of comic grief as he related his visit to the well-known monastery of St. Bernard, when, in answer to his eager inquiries as to the saving of life in the snow by the dogs, the good monks had informed him that, like many two-footed creatures, they enjoyed a reputation they scarcely deserved, and rather followed the monks than were followed by them. There was a little white fox-nosed Pomeranian, belonging to his elder daughter, and which he had christened by the name of the landlady in "Box and Cox," Mrs. Bouncer, for, unlike all landladies, she had a disrelish for her lodgers. At one time I was offered a magnificent Spanish mastiff—one of those awe-inspiring buff-coloured creatures with a great coal-black snout we sometimes meet stalking with dignity through the street. This I made him a present of, and it was accordingly despatched to Gad's Hill, and he was much pleased at the idea of receiving it. The animal spent the night at our house, signifying his presence occasionally by long melancholy baying. I had sundry misgivings, as these beasts are of a ferocious kind, and are or were used in their own country for the amiable occupation of hunting down escaped slaves. However, he liked him; and Sultan—such was his name—though affecting a surly reserve to every one else, was sagacious enough to show great affection to the master of the house. Things went on very well for a time: when a favourite kitten, admitted to the drawing-room and much petted, one day unaccountably disappeared. Search was made, but it was never heard of again, and it was

assumed it had been stolen by one of the tramps who were always passing the gate. No suspicion, however, rested on the real culprit. The next incident shall be related in his master's own pleasant words, taken from a letter to myself:—"Sultan has grown amazingly, and is a sight. But he is so accursedly fierce to other dogs that I am obliged to take him out muzzled. Also he has an invincible repugnance to soldiers, which in a military district like Chatham is inconvenient. Such is his spirit, that with his muzzle tight on he dashed into the heart of a company in heavy marching order, and pulled down a private. Except under such provocation he is as gentle and docile with me as a dog can possibly be."

Later came another incident in Sultan's career:—

"Last night," he says, "the gardener fired at some man in the garden upon whom he had come suddenly, and who kicked him in a dangerous manner. I immediately turned out, unloosed Sultan, and hunted the vagabond. We couldn't get hold of him, but the intelligence of the dog, and the delighted confidence he imparted to me, as we tumbled across country into the dark, were quite enchanting. Two policemen, appearing in the distance and making a professional show of energy, had a narrow escape. As he was in the act of rushing at them, I was obliged to hold him round the neck with both arms, and call on the force to vanish in an inglorious manner."

"A friend," he wrote on another occasion, "has sent me from America a thoroughbred young black Newfoundland dog since you were here. Sultan (who hates him mortally), Linda, I, and three or four small dogs with the nature of canine parasites and toadies, make a show in the lanes and woods which I specially beseech you to come and see.

We only want the 'renowned dog Cæsar' (alluding to a story of mine) to make us matchless."

He was making rapid way with his master. "I cannot thank you too much," he wrote again, "for Sultan. He is a noble fellow, has fallen into the ways of the family with a grace and dignity that denote the gentleman, and came down to the railway to welcome me home, with a profound absence of interest in my individual opinion of him, which captivated me completely. I am going home to-day to take him about the country and improve his acquaintance. You will find a perfect understanding between us, I hope, when you next come. (He has only swallowed Bouncer once and temporarily.)"

All this seemed friendly and encouraging; but in the household, and among the neighbours, suspicion was rife. It was alarming to hear of his having broken loose muzzled, and coming home covered with blood.

He went off one day to have a sort of prize-fight with a dog of his own size, weight, and age, residing some distance off, of whom he was jealous, and after a terrible battle left him almost dead. Yet his master still clung to him. Indeed, no dog ever had such a chance, or was more tolerated. But at last it came to a fatal point beyond which toleration could not safely go. One day a scream was heard at the gate, and those who rushed out found that the dog had seized a neighbour's child by the leg. It was rescued just in time, though mangled. This was an outrage for which the country ever exacts one satisfaction. The keeping of "a ferocious dog" is not tolerated.

Fortunately, the luckless creature did no serious mischief. But he little guessed that he had sealed his own doom. "The child's leg is sore and stiff,

but it has not presented a single bad symptom, and she has very nearly recovered from her fright. After such a warning, there could be no doubt that so fierce an animal should not be kept. Mr. Dickens, of course, immediately flogged him. At the time he^d knew as well as possible how guilty he was. He was muzzled and shut up for the night, and yesterday morning the gardener took him to the end of the meadow and shot him, and he was buried in the field. The poor dog dropped *without a struggle or even a cry*, I am happy to say—so the execution was performed as skilfully and mercifully as it could be done. The gardener took him as far away from the house as he could to kill him, still we all heard the shot, and I can't tell you how terrible it was. We all went to bed dreading it the night before, and I don't think we, any of us, slept for an hour at a time during the night, from the dread and expectation of hearing the execution. We were all afraid the poor dog would give a howl which would be heard a long way. Every way, I think he is better dead, for he led an unhappy life. We never dared to take him out without a muzzle since the time when he nearly killed our neighbour's dog."

Such was the account of one of the family. But to the master himself there was something curiously dramatic in the affair. And he wrote of the event—an important one in the district—to myself and other friends: "Your mention of the late Sultan touches me nearly. He was the finest dog I ever saw, and between me and him there was a perfect understanding. But, to adopt the popular phrase, it was so very confidential that 'it went no further.' He would fly at anybody else with the greatest enthusiasm for destruction. I have

frequently seen him, muzzled, hold a great dog down with his chest and feet. He has broken loose (muzzled) and come home covered with blood, again and again. And yet he never disobeyed me, unless he had first laid hold of a dog. You heard of his going to execution, evidently supposing the procession to be a party detached in pursuit of something to kill or eat? It was very affecting. Also of his bolting a blue-eyed kitten, and making me acquainted with the circumstance by his agonies of remorse (or indigestion)."

And to his Swiss correspondent, Cerjat: "The big dog on a day last autumn, having seized a little girl (sister to one of the servants) whom he knew and was bound to respect, was flogged by his master and then sentenced to be shot at seven next morning. He went out very cheerfully with the half-dozen men told off for the purpose, evidently thinking that they were going to be the death of somebody unknown. But observing in the procession an empty wheelbarrow and a double-barrelled gun, he became meditative, and fixed the bearer of the gun with his eyes. A stone deftly thrown across him by the village blackguard (chief mourner) caused him to look round for an instant, and he then fell down dead, shot through the heart."

Such was the fate of Sultan.

The Guild of Literature and Art brings back another day spent with him in the greatest enjoyment; so charming and pleasant in all its incidents, that it seemed like some school-holiday in the country. Weather, scenery, company, good spirits, everything combined to set off the little junketing. We started betimes from Gad's Hill, coming up through that ever-inviting Kentish



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country which looks more inviting of a June morning; then, after an hour or so in town, repaired to the Great Northern Railway, where a large crowd of visitors had assembled. Stevenage, our destination, lay in the district of which Charles Lamb talked so fondly, and where he placed "Mackery End," in the green lanes of pleasant Hertfordshire; and green, rich enough it looked on this holiday. As we drew up at the station, there was the bustle of improvised vehicles, as usual insufficient; all that was handy or available in the way of transport being laid under contribution. The Lord of Knebworth, on whose demesne we were, had sent his carriage for his friend and his party. Away we sped through those green lanes, the stately country, and its ancient trees stretching out beyond, a spectacle to delight the author of "Rookwood," who I believe was present. The first duty of the day was to repair to the "College" itself—a pretty little row of red-brick houses, a colonnade, with tiny cheerful rooms into which every one insists on pushing his or her way, as if determined to inspect conscientiously and report under affidavit. Presently we were in the halls of the old mansion, received by the host, whom I had then met for the first time. I see the picturesque scene as we drive up, the long antique front of the house as background, like a scene in a play, while the steps and broad space in front of the entrance were crowded with a festive gaily dressed throng, in the centre of which, leaning on his stick, stood the host, who advanced to greet his famous guest. That meeting would have made a picture. Yet it would be difficult to meet him under more interesting circumstances—the host of the day in his own ancient castle, and surrounded by what

one of the newspapers in a generous and alliterative enthusiasm called "all the leaders of literature," an expression that amused some of the "leaders" themselves hugely.

He was a strangely interesting man, with his dreamy manner, and low voice and curious eyes, and the tranquil yet effective way in which he acquitted himself showed what quiet force and dignity there was in him. I always admired the genuine interest he took in the craft of letters, having always that delight in the old profession which never leaves a man. He read everything that came out, and with enjoyment. A story of my own he was good enough thus to appreciate :

"I want to tell you," he wrote to his friend, "that I greatly admire the novel now running. It strikes me to be a really great novel, which is a very rare thing. There are bits about the heroine which show wholesale knowledge of the human heart, and the plot seems hitherto deeply planned and well carried out. It is impossible for any writer who comes after you to escape some obligations to you, and this is shown in one of the characters. But I like the work altogether, and it is original. I am the more surprised at its merit, because I had read some other work by the same reputed writer and had not been much struck by it. It is a better work than 'Felix Holt.'" I know what risk I run in printing these lines ; but the motive may be understood. It served as a flattering encouragement ; but it is really a proof of the hearty eagerness with which this interesting man followed the common course of the publications of the day ; not accepting merely the official recognized productions, but examining for himself, on the chance of finding what would be entertaining and have merit. In

a letter to myself, he explained that he had been "exceedingly struck by the depth of power in all the earlier portions; but with the later Numbers I am not quite so well pleased or satisfied; and I believe the reason to be, not in any fault of mere construction, but because towards the close the antagonistic or disagreeable element overpowers the sympathetic or agreeable. I do not know whether you quite understand what I mean." I shall only say that the story was called "The Second Mrs. Tillotson," and return to Knebworth.

The numbers gathered there were extraordinary, and of all departments. There were actors, like Webster and Buckstone, dramatists, novelists, "press men," etc. A plain, white-haired looking man was the venerable Charles Knight, while near him was to be seen Peter Cunningham—two persons whom it was impossible not to regard with deep interest and respect, and to whom "Old London" owes so much. Inquiries being in a short time made for "Peter," it was found that he had disappeared; and I read the roguish delight of our chief as he expatiated on the characteristic cause of the absence. Presently we were in the quaint and antique gardens, where a band was performing, and where soon our host had organized quadrilles and waltzes, sultry as it was. And I recall my own *vis-à-vis* in the former of these measures—a pleasant Cabinet Minister, who footed it merrily, with many a jest, though he has since become very serious, and cast off that "old man." The day sped on thus *al fresco*. In the afternoon we repaired to the great hall, where a banquet, or "collation," was set out. In due course our host made his speech, graceful and cultured, as everything that came from his hand was. Then rose the bright, keen, brilliant figure,

as if on his main-deck in the breeze, and offering a curious contrast to the Moslem-like tranquillity of the person who preceded him; and with singular dramatic and incisive tones, he spoke:—

“Ladies and gentlemen, it was said by a very sagacious person, whose authority I am sure my friend of many years will not impugn, seeing that he was named Augustus Tomlinson, the kind friend and philosopher of Paul Clifford—it was said by that remarkable man, ‘Life is short, and why should speeches be long?’ An aphorism so sensible under all circumstances, and particularly in the circumstances in which we are placed, with this delicious weather and such charming gardens near us, I shall practically adopt on the present occasion; and the rather so because the speech of my friend was exhaustive of the subject, as his speeches always are, though not in the least exhaustive of his audience. . . .

“Now, I am sure I shall be giving utterance to the feelings of my brothers and sisters in literature in proposing ‘Health, long life, and prosperity to our distinguished host.’ Ladies and gentlemen, you know very well that when the health, life, and beauty now overflowing these halls shall have fled, crowds of people will come to see the place where he lived and wrote. Setting aside the orator and statesman—for happily we know no party here but this agreeable party—setting aside all this, you know very well that this is the home of a very great man whose connection with Hertfordshire every other county in England will envy for many long years to come. You know that when this hall is dullest and emptiest you can make it, when you please, brightest and fullest by peopling it with the creations of his brilliant fancy. Let us all wish together that

they may be many more—for the more they are the better it will be, and, as he always excels himself, the better they will be. I ask you to listen to their praise and not to mine, and to let them, not me, propose his health."

It is impossible to describe the effect of these well-chosen words, delivered with every grace that fitted the scene, the gala dresses, the sunlight through the stained glass, and the cheerful board. I know I found myself, with many others, shouting at its close with enraptured delight. The day stole by too fast, for now it was evening; we had to depart. Our host seemed to retire and fade out, as it were; and as I wandered from room to room I would come on him, seated at a little table, in his somewhat fantastic dress *à la* D'Orsay, looking at some mystic volume, or languidly showing it. However, at last we drove away in the slow-setting sunlight. Near the station a new inn or "public" had been opened, named, in compliment to the guest, "OUR MUTUAL FRIEND;" on approaching which, in our stately equipage, we noted that the green benches, set outside for the comfort of the traveller, were full to overflowing. As we swept by, all rose, and, with uplifted goblets, gave stentorian cheers. The favourite twinkle of enjoyment came into his eyes at this compliment, and a mixed or compound expression of amusement, restraint, and gravity passed over his face. "My literary brethren," he said, "offering homage to genius." After all, who but must confess "he still has found his warmest welcome at an inn"! And so all had sensibly adjourned to the Mutual Friend. Somewhere about ten o'clock at night we were all at the rooms of "the office"—a convenient, pleasant *pied-à-terre* for such transitory passage—when, according to

his hospitable thought, we must have a short, hurried but satisfactory supper before going down to "Gad's," some time about eleven o'clock. "Just a morsel," he said; which took the shape of a noble tongue from Fortnum's, and a lobster salad, and a bottle of the "sparkling." He himself used to invest such delicacies with an extra flavour and sparkle. A few phrases from him, and you thought of wassail and the feasting at Dingley Dell: though, apart from this, everything he set down or ordered was really choice, and marked by his own good taste and judgment. If it was a cigar, it was out of a parcel the present of an American captain, or some one competent to buy. If it were cognac or whisky, it was from one best competent to know such things. And yet no one was more really moderate in such matters; his performance did not correspond to his anticipatory *gusto*. He liked talking in a cosy way of such things.

At last we got to Charing Cross Station, hence to Gravesend about midnight, where his Irish jaunting-car was waiting, which he drove himself; and so, in the midnight air, we rolled along these Kentish green lanes, and after a short, swift run, reached "home." The work of that day seems a dream; and dream it is in one sad sense. Though not so long since, how many figures are wanting to the group! Host, and the great guest; many, many of the "leaders of literature," real and sham, who assisted; John Forster, who was deputed to receive guests and organize the whole; Charles Knight; "Peter" Cunningham, who disappeared; Halliday, etc. The said houses, so sportively inaugurated, I believe never sheltered a tenant, and have since been sold to private persons.

His house was on the line between London and Paris, and he could be in France, a country of

which he was very fond, almost in a couple of hours. The dreadful, well-remembered Staplehurst accident, which occurred on his return from one of these favourite expeditions, had, as is well known, a serious effect on his system ; but he had another narrow escape, some years later, which has never been noted. After giving his Readings in Belfast, he started for Dublin by the mid-day limited mail, the party consisting of himself, his agent, his sister-in-law, and myself. As we were walking up and down the platform, I remember the station-master coming to make a request on the part of a local functionary that he might be allowed to share the compartment, "for the pleasure of enjoying Mr. Dickens's society." This, however, was politely declined, simply from the awkwardness and constraint which such a companionship would involve. The train consisted but of three or four carriages, with a *coupé* next the engine which was kept for the great author and his party. It was somewhere beyond Portadown, I think, that there came a crash or bang on the top of the carriage, which was followed by a grinding of the wheels and violent exertion and excitement on the part of the engine-driver and his mates, who suddenly brought the train to a stop. Every one got out and gathered round the engine, when it appeared that the tire of the great driving-wheel had flown in huge fragments, one of which, a couple of feet long, had struck the top of our carriage, *en face*, just over the glass. A little lower, and it would have been in among us, and must certainly have struck dead a couple of the party. The prompt action of the driver had brought all to a halt before the train could get off the rails, though I think the engine did. It was a curious scene, at that lonely part of the road, the dozen or so passengers stand-

ing round the engine, wrecked, the broken fragments jammed into the works or scattered about. A guard went on behind with a flag, to stop an expected train coming in the other direction. We waited nearly half an hour, when it arrived and drew up. The engine was taken off, and took us on. I have often thought since of the horrible and unusual form of death by a second "railway accident" from which he certainly had escaped.

On another occasion I found myself at Gad's Hill, with the late excellent, worthy George Moore—a simple, earnest man, whose simplicity was, I know, welcome to the host. I recollect telling this gentleman a piece of news about some friend in a distant part of the kingdom, which gave him an agreeable surprise, on which our host shook his head significantly. "There, again!" he said, "what I always say: the world is so much narrower and smaller than is believed." This was a favourite theory of his: that people were more nearly and curiously connected than appeared. He had many of these little theories, illustrated, not by any means solemnly, but with a sort of bright and smiling mystery, and, indeed, they added a charm to his conversation:—to wit, his account of "averages," such as that a particular number of people *must* be killed on the railways within the year. Once he told me that I had been seen walking by the office, and that I had looked at him fixedly, walked on, and disappeared, at the time being at the other end of the kingdom. He was thus fond of the mysterious in a small way, and had generally a store of something curious in this direction.

The following are some extracts from his ever-pleasing letters:—

"W—— is ordered away for rest and change.

The Paris paper is welcome, and 'Theodore of Corsica' shall receive unbounded hospitality in these halls. I am ready for him as soon as he likes. . . . Regarding the Readings, thus the case stands. I mean to take farewell of this great occupation in the ending winter and spring. I shall not fail to claim your promise to join the pilgrimage. Dolby begs me to tell you that he is full of joyful anticipations. He has been utterly hardened by his American bullying, and has none but private feelings left. Many thanks for your kind welcome home. Always cordially yours. . . ."

"I shall be delighted to see you at Gad's Hill, and hope you will bring a bag with you." He then added that they "were but a small party," for one of the family had "been decoyed away to — for the election week—in the Conservative interest! Think of my feelings as a Radical parent. *M——*" (the person in question) "is at this moment helping to receive (and deceive) the voters—which is very awful. . . . But in the week after this next we shall be in great croquet force, so I shall then hope to persuade you to come back for a few days, and we will try to make you some amends for a dull Sunday. Turn it over in your mind, and try to manage it. . . ."

"I ought to have written to you days and days ago to thank you for your charming book; to tell you with what interest and pleasure I read it as soon as it came here, and to add that, honestly affected (far more so than your modesty will readily believe) by your intimate knowledge of those touches of mine concerning childhood, it has become a matter of real feeling with me, and I postponed its expression because I couldn't satisfactorily get it out of myself, and at last I came to the conclusion it must be left in. . . ."

"'Tom Butler' is in print, and I like him very much. But I do not understand how long you propose to make him. How tall is he to grow? With how many parts is he to expand? Enlighten me, there's a dear fellow, and I will presently respond. . . .

"I am glad you like the Children, and am particularly glad that you like the Pirate. I remember very well when I had a general idea of occupying that place in history—at the same age. But I loved more desperately than Boldheart. Enclosed is the American story."

This was in reference to an audience that had been strangely and ignorantly cold :

"It was very considerate and thoughtful in you to write to me, and I have been much gratified by your note. It is extraordinarily difficult to understand (from the point of action) an audience that does not express itself, and I certainly mistook mine on Wednesday night. When the murder was done in London the people were frozen while it went on, but came to life when it was over, and rose to boiling point. I have now told D—that henceforth it must be set apart from all our other effects, and judged by no other 'Reading' standard. . . .

"Meantime—and till you come here for a few days—please consider that the dreadful epithet and description are not withdrawn, but *cleave* to you. . . . I hope you haven't forgotten what the Honourable Charles Townshend vowed—'She was beautiful.'

"I hope that — has wrought miracles in the way of diabolically direct and persistent decision on the part of an eminent literary personage. It will be the crowning triumph and glory of the great institution.

"As to wills and will-making, I think the — case altogether too grimly dismal and too recent for revival with the B— family. I will have nothing to do in possession, remainder, or expectancy."

One of the pleasantest of his suggestions was a proposal to go with him on one of his reading tours. I was only able to carry out this plan partially, as other matters interrupted the plan, but I know how much I lost. I hear him now expatiating, laying out the attractions and enjoyments, as though such seductions were not needed. He spoke of a saloon-carriage which had been promised him to make the journey from London to Edinburgh—which would be victualled with baskets of dainties *à la* Fortnum and Mason. Arrived at Edinburgh, there were introductions and friends and sights *galore* held out. This part of the programme had to be set aside, as far as I was concerned, by some business matters, but I was enabled to go with him in another direction, and a most enjoyable time it was. There was with us the energetic and useful Dolby, ever on the *qui vive* where business was concerned. Our destination was a great northern manufacturing town. The incidents, apart from the interest of his companionship, were most novel and entertaining, and reminded one of his own stories. The curiosity at the hotel; the awkward attempts at accidental meeting on the stairs and lobby with a view of having a good look; the general stare from the less delicate-minded; the little attentions and offerings going on, incessantly imparted something dramatic.

It must, however, have been a weary business, tedious and monotonous for such a man; yet the most delightful thing to note was that he was ever

buoyant, full of spirits and animation. He never flagged. Few could conceive what a delightful and dramatic story-teller he was, calling up a situation before you by a few touches of a high dramatic kind—the eyes twinkling and sparkling; the cheeks, the mouth, wreathed over and over again in jocund smiles. Nor was he a mimic in the common sense, but carried away by a sort of intense expression which lighted all up. It was this which gave such a dramatic force to any story that he told. In the railway I recall his filling more than an hour with some sketches of "Old Rogers," the poet, and of his mode of telling a story. Those who attended the Readings will recall Justice Stareleigh: the strangely obtuse and owl-like expression, and the slow, husky croak with which the words were projected. This was borrowed from the "Poet of Memory," and many were the stories he told in his manner. The old man would relate his cut-and-dried "tales," always in the same fashion, and "go on," like a wheezy musical-box, on the smallest invitation. Sometimes he would go and dine with him, and he described the scene as piteously grotesque, a faithful man-servant cheerily suggesting the old stories which they knew by heart. Thus: "Tell Mr. Dickens, sir, the story of the Honourable Charles Townshend and the beautiful Miss Curzon." The old poet would start in a slow, almost Gregorian tone, and in curious old-fashioned phrase: "The Hon—our—able Charles Townshend" (this name will serve as well as another)—"became enamoured of Miss Curzon. She was beeyewtiful. He beribed her maid to conceal him in her cheeamber, and when she arrived to dress for a ball, emerged from his hiding-place. She looked at him fixedly, then said, 'Why don't you begin?'

She took him for the 'air-dresser.'" This, in this place, has not much effect, but with the face that was supplied, twisted so strangely, and the mournful unchanging voice, it became a histrionic feat of high order.

One day, from breakfast until almost past the afternoon, was spent at the table, when he was in extraordinary spirits and full of enjoyment, and told stories and drew fanciful sketches of droll, far-fetched situations, which he played with and touched and heightened in the most farcical style.

In nothing was he more delightful, or "in his element," as it is called, than in talking of all matters connected with the stage. He delighted in the very scent of the place, and welcomed any bits of news or gossip connected with it. It was enjoyable to watch his keen interest even in the obscurest histrionic elements. On this little expedition, as there was a free evening, it was understood, almost as of course, that we should visit the little local theatre, where he sat out very patiently some rather crude and ancient melodrama. Next morning at breakfast he was in possession of all local histrionic information—how the manager's wife engrossed all the leading characters for herself, and would let no one have any of the "fat," which was true almost literally; the manager a patient being. These things were pleasantly retailed and set off in his own lively way over the tea and coffee—and these things to hear one did seriously incline—for those who like the stage can never dismiss this sort of interest and reverence, and the sight of the meanest country theatre always raises curiosity and respect. In this view, he enjoyed allusions and stories connected with the melodramas of old times, and had some good ones to relate: as of the actor of

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Rochester Theatre, who forgot his part and could not attract or hear the prompter. At last, in desperation, he said to his comrade with deep "no-meaning," "*I will return anon!*" and then went off to consult his book. Another of his stories was connected with the "Castle Spectre," where an actor had taken the part of the imprisoned Earl on an emergency. He was told to say anything expressive of his condition and sufferings—fifteen years' imprisonment, etc. "For fifteen years have I been imprisoned here" (here a stop, with hoarse prompting, "Say you were starved!"), "and during *the whole of that period not a morsel of food has passed my lips!*" I recall his delight when "The Miller and his Men" was announced at Drury Lane. We were to have a regular night's enjoyment of this old fossil, the first words of which he used to quote, "more sacks for the mill!" A box was secured, and we went; but here again there was disappointment. It was not absurd, as we had hoped; it was simply tedious—there was nothing to laugh at. We came away looking a little ruefully at each other, and a more dramatically expressive face than his it would be hard to conceive, especially for those neutral or compounded expressions, half sly, half serious. "A merrier man within the limits of becoming mirth," etc.

One day he was not very well, and said he would lie on his sofa at the hotel and nurse himself. As a great treat, he had sent for a copy of "The Bride of Lammermoor," a work, he said, he had not read for a vast number of years, and of which he had almost forgotten the details. It would be a rare treat, therefore. It was amazing to find at the close of that long day how he had been *désillusionné*, and it was pleasant and in-

structive to hear his criticism. The strength of the story was there : but, he said, the clumsy shifts and inartistic treatment of the machinery ! Many have felt the same feeling on returning to some old favourite. And there can be no doubt that much of the *Waverley Novels* would fall under the slang definition of "padding." A favourite book of his, and one which he always delighted in, was "*Tom Cringle's Log*," and I think, too, "*Two Years before the Mast*"—both these books having the true briny element. Another work he relished was "*Little Pedlington*," whose author he knew well, and assisted charitably. There is a breath of humour akin to that in "*Pickwick*." "*Little Pedlington*" is a work too good and fine in its humour for the present generation, and indeed worthy of the "old masters." It was spoiled by clumsy additions and unnecessary episodes dragged in anyhow and everyhow ; but the humours are after the best old style. I always, however, set the author down as belonging to an era at the beginning of the century ; and, indeed, the fact that Liston "created" Paul Pry shows that he was remote enough. Once, talking in a railway carriage on this subject, he joined in the praises of this novel, saying that he was always particularly delighted with the parody of "*The Guide-Book*"—amazing me by telling me he had just been to see the author. It was hard to believe that he was actually alive, though in a sadly decayed state of body, mind, and condition. He then, with that singular power which he possessed, brought him before me, as it were, by a few touches. This, however, was not a mimicry—it was an intellectual operation ; he gave the air and tone of the person. He went to see him regularly and aided him.

Looking back to the incidents of my knowledge

of him, there is nothing, as I have so often said, but what is pleasant and agreeable to think of. He was ever ready, not so much with a jest or joke, as with a sympathetic good humour so much more welcome. On a certain occasion going abroad, we had found cash flying with alarming rapidity, and from Folkestone I had written to him to ask him to come to my aid with whatever was standing to my credit in his books. From him came at once :

“I enclose a cheque. ‘The little victims play’—with ready money—always under those circumstances, I am told! Ever your Venerable Sage,
“C. D.”

I remember, too, a great and important event on the commencement of housekeeping—his coming with his sister-in-law to dine, to a special dinner of inauguration: a nervous business. He was never so cheerful and good humoured at this experiment; and there were many things about it that must have suggested David Copperfield's attempt. As when, in the middle of the banquet, a splashing sound seemed to come from the hall, or rather from the roof down to the hall. The “new servant” had forgotten to turn off the water-cock at the top of the house, and the stream, soon overcharging and overflowing the tank, made its way on to the landing, and thence gushing downwards as a shower-bath. The distress caused by this *contretemps* may be conceived, as it was assumed that “all the pipes had burst!” But he soon made all pleasant. He entered into all these little incidents, and long since I had found that what pleased myself pleased him. I can safely say that no one of all my acquaintance so heartily enjoyed a story or adventure. So with stories about him-

self. "Concerning the Green Covers, I find their leaves to be budding on unquestionable newspaper authority; but, upon my soul, I have no other knowledge of their being in embryo. I cannot find that there is any one in Rochester (a sleepy old city) who has anything to tell about Garrick, except what is not true. His brother the wine merchant would be more in Rochester way, I think." I recollect one story he was genuinely delighted with—the debate over the inscription for a monument to a Dublin physician, to be erected in a cemetery, and some one suggesting that one in St. Paul's to Wren: "*Si monumentum quaeris, circumspice!*"

I have now on my shelves a complete set of his works, in, I think, thirty volumes, which came to me in a curious and pleasant way. I had prepared a series of papers on some popular subject, the execution of which was not what he intended, though they were duly printed and filled a large space. In the next settlement a very handsome sum was set down for this, which I firmly declined to accept. When this resolution was not to be shaken, his delicate mind hit on what he knew would be most acceptable. I have also a fine copy of his "Copperfield," bound according to his directions in mazarine blue. Finally, on the desk before me is his well-worn paper-knife, sprinkled with blue ink, and his paper-weight—some of those articles which he directed by his will to be distributed among a few friends.

During the last season of his life, as it was to prove, he had taken a house in town, at the Marble Arch,—a house which belonged to Mr. Milner Gibson. Here he found opportunity to be most hospitable, as he ever was, and gave dinner-parties and a concert. At one of those dinner-parties I

found myself next to Sir Edwin Landseer, then, like his host, almost close on his term. The house had been, it is well known, associated with Mr. Home's feats, and an amusing discussion arose between the host and the painter, who had witnessed some of them. Nay, it was affirmed that on the drawing-room ceiling there was still to be seen the medium's signature in pencil, written while he was aloft floating in the air. Sir Edwin was an agreeable neighbour. Not very long before, he had gone to an artist, of whom I knew something, and who also painted animals. Noticing the lumps of paint—"scrapings" of the palette—on a piece of board, he took it up, and carelessly, but with art, worked all into a spirited dog's head.

But the concert was a more ambitious effort, and a very interesting thing indeed it was, to see his rooms filled with a mixture of the town elements—artistic, literary, and fashionable. His friend Joachim came to play for him, with also various singers of eminence, gratified to give him that proof of their regard. There were Santley, Hallé, Cummings, and the Glee Union. So the music was admirable. He himself was in good spirits, though not looking well; but was genial, doing his host-duties everywhere with animation, taking ladies up and down to supper. I am looking now at a little cosaque, which I saw him merrily "exploding" at the supper-table, holding it out to a lady, who carefully treasured it. Almost that day two months he was gone for ever.

Indeed, at this time he knew not what was on him. And yet, as was indeed to be expected with a man of his position, he was pursued with invitations to dinners and parties.

"I have delayed," he wrote, two days after his own party, "answering your kind note on the

chance of discovering some loophole in my engagements for to-night. But I am sorry to say that I have got into a complicated state of engagements. This almost always happens in the last month of my term or stay in town, but this year it is worse than ever. Pray accept a dismal absentee's best wishes for a great success to-night, and give — my kindest regards. To crown my distresses, I write with a steel pen (which I can never use), closely hemmed in on each side" (he was writing from a club)"by a talkative person of disagreeable opinions."

Every letter he thus contrived to make pleasant by some little stroke or picture in his own manner. Within a few days, he had written at his favourite country place :

"I have been obliged to fly for a time from the dinings and other engagements of this London season, and to take refuge here to get myself into my usual gymnastic condition, where I am looking forward to the pleasure of welcoming you and — to this pretty country. I have been subject for a few years past to a neuralgic attack in the foot, originating in overwalking in deep snow, and revived by a hard winter in America. For the last three weeks it has made me dead-lame, and it now obliges me to beg absolution from all the social engagements I had made. Deprivation of my usual walks is a very serious matter to me, as I cannot work unless I have my constant exercise. Your kind note, therefore, finds me helpless and moody, but virtuously virtuous. I shall hope to be vicious again soon, and to report myself to you as a good example of dissipation and free living, until when and always, yours," etc.

On the 2nd of June, just before this letter was written, Mr. Freake's pretty theatre in Cromwell Road was filled to overflowing by a large and

fashionable company, to witness a dramatic performance in which his daughter, Miss Dickens, and Mrs. Charles Collins took part. The pieces were got up with extraordinary pains—the first being a French one, “The Prima Donna,” with a blind girl as heroine. The scenery was arranged and designed by Mr. Millais.

CROMWELL HOUSE.

Thursday, June 2, 1870.

“A HAPPY PAIR.”

CHARACTERS.

Mr. Honeyton	...	...	MR. AUGUSTUS SPALDING.
Mrs. Honeyton	...	...	MISS HARRIET YOUNG.

“PRIMA DONNA.”

CHARACTERS.

Dr. Holbein	...	...	MR. HASTINGS HUGHES.
Eric	...	...	MR. CRAWFORD GROVE.
Rouble	...	...	MR. HERMAN MERIVALE.
Stella	...	...	MISS DICKENS.
Alice	...	...	MRS. CHARLES COLLINS.

“LE MYOSOTIS.”

Bouffonerie.

Corbillon (Empailleur)	...	...	MR. HAROLD POWER.
Schuitzberg (Violoncelliste)	...	...	MR. ALFRED THOMPSON.

The acting of the two ladies was exceedingly touching and clever—as was indeed to be expected, with so skilled and painstaking an instructor, who had taken enormous pains. He was behind the scenes the whole time, but no one saw him; and he got home as speedily as he could, and away to the country to the soft restoring breezes of his loved Kentish home. That night of the play was Thursday. On the following Thursday he was seized with the last fatal attack.

Mr. Forster speaks of “that blithe face”—a happy word. “It is almost thirty years,” Mr. Carlyle wrote, ‘since my acquaintance with him began; and on my side, I may say, every new

meeting ripened it into more and more clear discernment of his rare and great worth as a brother man: a most cordial, sincere, clear-sighted, quietly decisive, just and loving man: till at length he had grown to such a recognition with me as I have rarely had for any man of my time. This I can tell you three, for it is true and will be welcome to you: to others less concerned I had as soon *not* speak on such a subject.' 'I am profoundly sorry for *you*,' Mr. Carlyle at the same time wrote to me; 'and indeed for myself and for us all. It is an event world-wide; a *unique* of talents suddenly extinct; and has "eclipsed," we too may say, "the harmless gaiety of nations." No death since 1866 has fallen on me with such a stroke. No literary man's hitherto ever did. *The good, the gentle, high-gifted, ever-friendly, noble Dickens,—every inch of him an Honest Man.*'" Those five words, and that last sentence; always seem the happiest and most *recalling* description of him that has been penned.

The last time I saw him was some three or four weeks before his death, at the Wellington Street office. I see now the spare, almost feminine shoulders (this always recurred to me), in which there was much expression—the line was so delicate and nervous. But he was a little depressed. I had called about some amateur plays to which I asked him to come, and he spoke of the innumerable invitations which were being showered on him. That was the last glimpse of my true and genial friend.

But I shall not forget his kindly hearty look, as he seemed to say, "This does not apply to you." He had to dine somewhere; "but I'll come in to you afterwards if I can." He spoke then cheerfully of various things, and of his friend Regnier the actor—how he had seen him play in the

"Vieux Garçon:" but how he had got too old for the stage; "in fact," he added, with his old merry twinkle, "he is a *vieux garçon* himself!" The last thing was to take me into another room, to show me one of the huge yellow placards—announcing one of my new stories—hung up against the wall, which he thought would please me.

On June 14, 1870, one of the most fiercely hot days of that summer, I walked into the cool and shaded aisles of Westminster. On that morning had been his funeral, and many were going in, too, for the same purpose. At the end of the transept some forms covered with a black drapery had been brought together to make a fence round the opening in the pavement. Down below, and not very far down, lay the oak coffin—handsome, solid, and panelled; while in bright bold characters the familiar cheery name "CHARLES DICKENS" looked up with a sort of hint of the bright face below. There was a wreath of white roses at his feet, ferns at his head, rows of white and red roses down the side. It was a pleasing and gracious thing to leave all this visible, which, I believe, was done for some days.

Illustration is one of the most flattering forms of homage. The public must have its favourite in convenient shape to frame. One would have thought, in a photographic age, that this taste could be more than satisfied; but the woodcut and lithograph are called even more abundantly in aid.

To prove what may be done in a small way, so as to form an always agreeable souvenir of a person we liked, I will show here what I have done with the rather slender materials that I possess connected with the memory of Mr. Dickens. These I arranged, not very scientifically, in a large

volume ; and as I turn them over, they are truly suggestive. For there are some forty letters, most interesting and confidential. There are playbills, and a vast number of engravings, sketches, and innumerable other little souvenirs. Indeed a very interesting essay might be written on his various portraits. In his youth he seems to have had a bright, brilliant face, full of spirit and intelligence, set off by the abundance of hair and the picturesque stock then in fashion, and which threw out a face effectively. I have got together as many of these records of him, at different periods of his life, as I could discover. The first is a very brilliant head by Lane, in 1838, done with a free black brilliant touch : a fine forehead, round speaking eyes, out of which the hair is with difficulty kept. The lips seem thick. Something like this is the one given in Horne's book. Then comes the profile sketch by D'Orsay, showing an almost feminine outline, and dated 1841. Next come those of Maclise, who sketched him often. The most charming and elegant of these is a little airy profile placed by Mr. Forster at the head of his sonnet to his friend at the beginning of the "Life of Goldsmith," and which is also given in a trio of profiles—himself, his wife, and sister-in-law—in the "Life." There is here a refined boyish delicacy of outline that is charming. Then there is the well-known Maclise portrait—often engraved—with the stock and pin ; but here the face has got more firm and solid. Of this I have a fine proof, it being re-engraved in the boldest style by Graves. Next there comes a drawing, one by Lehmann, done at a time when the author had begun to let his beard and moustache grow, which considerably altered his look. This drawing has been photographed and published in various sizes

in Germany. Next there is one of the same character and effect, though rather heavy, by the once fashionable and now forgotten Baugniet, who lithographed everybody that was worth lithographing. Then there is the charming characteristic scene in Maclise's sketch of his reading his work to his friends, admirable for the vividness of the drawings of Forster, Carlyle, and others; while with sly compliment he sets a faint halo round the reader's head. Now comes Leslie's capital and splendid theatrical picture of Bobadil in costume, in which the eyes speak and the likeness is perfect. There is the large engraving after Frith's portrait, which did not give satisfaction, but always seemed to me to convey his quick, keen, piercing gaze admirably. Ary Scheffer's portrait of him may be seen at the National Portrait Gallery; but there is a gentle feebleness about it, a mediæval spiritualness which the artist imparted. It is more like the pictures of Hawthorne, and lacks spirit; in fact, it is unrecognizable, at first. These are the more official portraits. It is something to have been painted by Ary Scheffer, Leslie, Maclise, and Frith! Some time ago, a drawing by Cruikshank of him was bought for twenty or thirty pounds, and a clever etching of it published by Mr. Kerslake, who had for sale more curious things—"seven original portraits, in pencil, by George Cruikshank, one full length, five heads, and a slight preliminary sketch (from the artist's private collection)." The price asked was ten guineas—not by any means excessive. The date was about 1837, when both belonged to a club where his sketches were said to have been executed. Then there is a curious etching of him by "Phiz," with an extravagant length of limb and rather insipid expression, a Punch and Judy in the background.

Most of the later engravings have been done from photographs. He always said himself that what he thought the best likeness was one of these gigantic heads on tiny legs, a form once in high favour, the original, by "Sem," which I saw in a dealer's shop. I have also two French coloured pictures of the same kind by "Gill." A pleasing picture is the photo-lithograph published in *Life*, "Charles Dickens reading to his Daughters at Gad's Hill," which recalls him very forcibly.

But "Dickens" has now become quite a department for collectors and booksellers: witness the following list of "curios," and the prices demanded:—

"'A Christmas Carol,' 'The Chimes,' 'The Poor Traveller,' Boots at the Holly Tree Inn, and Mrs. Gamp. In 1 vol., 12mo, stamped binding. £2 2s. 1858. Being the versions arranged by the author for his own Readings. This was his own set, and some of the pages have excisions, underlines, and other marks denoting emphasis in reading, while the fly-leaf bears his autograph, 'Charles Dickens, at Plymouth, Tuesday, Seventh January, 1862.' The binding has flaps for protecting the book while in use.

"A collection of six pencil drawings by George Cruikshank, being original designs for plates in the first edition of 'Sketches by Boz,' signed by the artist, framed and glazed. £21. 1836-37. Comprising, among others, 'May Day in the Evening,' 'Horatio Sparkins,' 'The Boarding House,' 'The Great Winglebury Duel,' 'The Bloomsbury Christening.' Being the same size as the plates, they are admirably adapted for insertion in the book, thus making a copy of high interest.

"Address on the issuing of a new edition of his works, the original manuscript in Charles Dickens's autograph, signed, 3 pages, 4to, with the same

printed. £6 6s. Accompanying the manuscript are two portraits of Dickens and a plate of his grave.

"Dickens's Christmas Books, viz. 'Christmas Carol,' 1845; 'The Chimes,' a goblin story, 1845; 'Cricket on the Hearth,' a fairy tale of home, 1846; 'Battle of Life,' a love story, 1846; 'Haunted Man and the Ghost's Bargain,' 1848. Together 5 vols., 12mo, all first editions, fine set in the original red cloth, gilt edges. £10 10s. 1843-48. Perhaps the most interesting set ever offered for sale. At the last page of 'A Christmas Carol,' the following, on a slip of paper, is inserted, "And so, as Tiny Tim observed, God bless us every one!" Charles Dickens, Twentyninth May, 1846." The 'Cricket on the Hearth' has a playbill of the first performance at York of the drama founded upon it, with an elaborate analysis of the piece, and extracts from the book, April 15, 1846. The 'Battle of Life' contains an autograph letter signed by Dickens, dated from Rosemont, Lausanne, Switzerland, August 31, 1846, addressed, per favour of John Forster, Esq., to Robert Keeley, Esq., respecting the dramatization by him of the book in time to act on the night of its publication. It contains also the playbill of its production as a Christmas piece by Keeley at the Lyceum Theatre, as foreshadowed in Dickens's letter, and announced as being adapted, by the express permission of the author, from the proof-sheets, by Albert Smith. It is the more interesting being dated from Switzerland, in that the dedication reads: 'This Christmas Book is cordially inscribed to my English friends in Switzerland.'

"'Oliver Twist.'—A collection of four original drawings by George Cruikshank, illustrating this work; one a finished design in sepia, the others

in pencil, one signed, and all framed and mounted. £10 10s. 1838. Comprising—1. 'The Evidence destroyed' (vol. iii. page 20); 2. 'Monks and the Jew' (vol. ii. page 260), varying from the finished engraving considerably; 3. 'Oliver escapes being bound Apprentice to the Sweep' (vol. i. page 48), comprising two sketches for the plate, each varying from the other and from the engraving; 4. A series of sketches, on one sheet, signed, and bearing in the artist's autograph the following:—'Sketches for "Oliver Twist." Suggestions to Mr. C. Dickens, the writer.' It was upon this dispute that Dickens and Cruikshank parted company, and it will be remembered that in 1872 the latter issued a very acrid pamphlet, entitled 'Artist and Author,' dealing with the question of the origin of this and other books illustrated by him.

"'Pickwick Papers.' With fine original impressions of the forty-three plates by Seymour and 'Phiz.' First edition, 8vo, uncut copy in the original parts, with all the green paper wrappers. £8 8s. 1843. Containing the characteristic address issued with Part 10, which is often wanting.

"Playbill of an amateur performance at Knebworth, on November 18, 1850, of Ben Jonson's 'Every Man in his Humour,' and Inchbald's farce 'Animal Magnetism.' 18s. 1850. Dickens playing Captain Bobadil and the Doctor, other parts being taken by Sir Henry Hawkins, Mark Lemon, John Forster, Douglas Jerrold, John Leech, Frederick Dickens, Miss Hogarth, and Mrs. Mark Lemon, 'who has most kindly consented to act, in lieu of Mrs. Charles Dickens, disabled by an accident.' Accompanying the playbill is a four-page 'Epilogue, written for the occasion, by Mr. Delmé Radcliffe.'

"Playbill of an amateur performance of the Guild of Literature and Art, at the Hanover Square

Rooms, on June 18, 1851. The play, Lytton's 'Not so Bad as We seem,' and a Farce, by Charles Dickens and Mark Lemon, entitled 'Mr. Nightingale's Diary;' the whole produced under the direction of Mr. Charles Dickens. 10s. 6d. 1851. Among the performers were Dickens, John Forster, Douglas Jerrold, Mark Lemon, R. H. Horne, Wilkie Collins, John Tenniel, Dr. Westland Marston, etc.

"Playbill of an amateur performance of the Guild of Literature and Art, before the Queen and Prince Albert, at Devonshire House, Piccadilly, on May 16, 1851. The play, Lytton's 'Not so Bad as We seem,' for the first time; the whole produced under the direction of Mr. Charles Dickens. 15s. 1851. With the same cast as at the Hanover Square Rooms, Dickens playing the part of Lord Wilmot. The Duke of Devonshire's private band performed an overture composed for the occasion.

"'Sketches by Boz.' First octavo edition, extra copy, containing a duplicate coloured set of the forty plates by George Cruikshank. 8vo, fine copy in polished calf, super extra, gilt edges. £10 10s. 1839. Twelve of the designs are entirely new, not having appeared in the first and smaller edition, while all the plates are engraved in a larger and better style. There is no record of any copy having been sold with two sets of plates—plain and coloured.

"'Sunday under Three Heads,' As it is, As Sabbath Bills would make it, and As it might be made, by Timothy Sparks. With six illustrations by 'Phiz,' first edition, 12mo, fine copy in the original wrapper, uncut (presentation copy), very rare. £12 12s."

Returning now to my volume, I find proof-sheets of my own, corrected by him in his neat hand and familiar blue ink. Here are tickets and

programmes for the Readings in red ink ; original wrappers of the "Pickwick" and "Nickleby" numbers, which have an odd air ; and, which is curious enough, the February number, 1834, of the *Monthly Magazine*, with its head of Milton, the fifth article in which is "Horatio Sparkins," which was his second contribution to literature—and a spirited and amusing one it is. Here also is a memorandum written after dinner at a friend's house : "You go by the North Kent Railway, by the train nearest to twelve o'clock, and take tickets for Higham station ;" and here is the ticket itself, preserved I know not how. Then there are pictures of all his various residences : Tavistock House, Gad's Hill, Doughty Street, at the Marble Arch, Broadstairs, and many others. Here is the Raven ; bills of fare ; report of the dinner given to him on going to America ; the songs, toasts, etc., and card that marked one's place ; a thick folio pamphlet, the auctioneer's sale catalogue of Gad's Hill ; the catalogue of his library, of the sale at Christie's, and pictures of scenes from his plays ; and, more interesting still, some bills of those early dramas written when a young man. Pictures of him giving his Readings, and, saddest of all, the last procession to Westminster Abbey.

But one of the most interesting *souvenirs* is an almost complete "file," if it may be so called, of a little journal which one of his younger children, now a clever and prospering barrister, conducted and published. A friend had made him a present of a boy's printing press, and his father was glad to encourage this dawning literary taste. The little enterprise was maintained for a very long time, and was a pleasant official record for acquaintances of what went on at Gad's Hill. A single specimen will not be an undue violation of confidence.

THE
GAD'S HILL GAZETTE

August 5th 1865

Price 2d

The management of the railway companies seems still to be in the same blundering & negligent state as it has been for some time, and more especially that of the Great Northern. As an instance of this, we annex the following. On Saturday evening, Chas Dickens Esqre, accompanied by the rest of the residents & visitors at Gad's Hill (who had been to Knebworth for the day)* were returning to London, when their journey was delayed by some wandering luggage trains, causing some danger & much inconvenience.

* For their visit to Knebworth see next page

Arrivals & Departures

P Fitzgerald Esqre left on Tuesday 1st. The visitors and residents of Gad's Hill, comprising P Fitzgerald Esqre, Mr & Mrs C Collins, C Dickens Esqre, Miss Dickens, and Miss Hogarth left on Saturday and returned very early next morning (1 o' clock a.m). C Dickens junr Esqre arrived on Friday and left on the next day.

Miscellaneous

The Gad's Hill party went to Knebworth on Saturday morning to view the new houses, built by the society of the Guild, Literature, & Art.

A very handsome lunch was given by Sir E B Lytton Bart, in the course of which he, and C Dickens Esqre delivered two brilliant speeches. Dancing then followed, and the Gad's Hill party, who had spent a very pleasant day returned late at night.

Since we published our list, we are proud to annex the names of two new subscribers to it viz Mrs Stunt and A Halliday Esqre.

We beg to acknowledge the receipt of letters on business from The Dean of Bristol, Miss Ely, C Kent Esqre, A Halliday Esqre, Miss Boyle and W H Humphery Esqre M P.

We are glad to inform our readers that Linda is much better.

The school children were to have had their annual treat on Tuesday last ; but owing to the inclemency of the weather, it was postponed till next week.

 Cricket

Upper v Lower Higham

This match was played on Friday July 28th and resulted in favour of the latter by 6 wickets.

In the first innings of both sides nobody distinguished himself except S Ford, who played very well. In the second innings, the Upper made a better stand, Messrs Gouge and Hindle playing best. Annexed is the score.

Upper

1st Innings		2nd Innings	
Blackman	bd Barnes	0	bd Barnes 4
Mr H Dickens	bd Lewis	3	bd Lewis 1
Whiting	bd Barnes	0	bd Lewis 3
Gouge	bd Barnes	5	bd Darkey 19
Mr Hindle	ct & bd Barnes	0	bd Darkey 11
Mr C D junr	bd Lewis	0	bd Barnes 0
Russell	ct & bd Lewis	4	ct Barnes 0
Mr E Dickens	ct & bd Lewis	1	bd Darkey 1
Ring	bd Barnes	2	bd Darkey 0
Brooker	bd Barnes	1	bd Barnes 0
Marsh	Not out	1	Not out 0
Extras 11		Extras 21	
Total—28—		Total—60	

Grand Total—88—

 Lower

1st Innings	2nd Innings
Lewis ct & bd Hindle	4 Run out 2
Ford bd Hindle	9 ct & bd Gouge 3
Barnes bd Hindle	9 Not out 28
Batchelor Run out	0 st H Dickens 1
Wright bd Gouge	0 bd Hindle 2
Mr Stunt junr ct E D	0 Not out 3
Stringer st Hindle	1
Read Not out	0
Darkey st Russell	0
Mr H Cobb ct C Dickens	0
Collier ct C Dickens junr	0
Extras	20
Total	43
Extras	7
Total	46
Grand Total	89

LATEST INTELLIGENCE.

Miss Dickens and Mrs Collins went to London, this morning (Friday) and are to return this evening, accompanied by M Stone Esqre. Ch Dickens Esqre left on Wednesday.

In Page 2, there is a missprint. Instead of The Guild, Literature & Art, read—The Guild 'OF' &c.

H Dickens is the present champion at billiards.

Some of the other members had a greater and more "grown up" interest, there being grotesque controversies carried on between the editor's father, who delighted in such an occasion, and some friend, such as the late (alas! this is a word I find myself using very often) Mr. Chorley. This gentleman wrote as to some coined grievance—it may have been real—of obstruction in the grounds, I think, over which he had fallen. Our host replied in his most delightful strain. Here, when unofficial, he was ever at his best.

CHAPTER V.

LITERARY FRIENDS: FORSTER—CARLYLE.

DURING the last dozen years, it is wonderful what a mortality there has been among men of mark in art and letters: Dickens, Lytton, Macready, Landseer, Mark Lemon, Leech, Wills, Thornbury, Tom Taylor, Landor, Harness, Peter Cunningham, Carlyle, Chorley, Procter, and more having passed away. One of the most remarkable figures in his circle was JOHN FORSTER, who seems to offer one of the most characteristic and telling specimens of a successful literary career, achieved by honest work and force of character. No one fought his way so resolutely from the days when he came up to town—like Johnson, determined to succeed—to learn in the lines of his own sonnet to his friend Dickens, that:

"Genius and its rewards are briefly told—
A liberal nature and a niggard doom."

All his friends knew that story of his intrepid,

steadily forward course, his determination to get on—not to be denied, as may be seen in that remarkable head, full of character and purpose. He always seemed to be the exemplar of the true literary man—no mere *writer* like so many, able to write and write at any notice, and about everything or anything. He was a diligent student, and laboured hard to cultivate his talent. The most gratifying thing in his course was to note his work: conscientious throughout, in everything he did his best, looking on "*giving anything to the press*" as a sort of solemn, responsible thing, not to be lightly attempted. His "*Life of Goldsmith*" and his "*Life of Dickens*" are most *artistic* specimens of the craft. They are written with a "style," the sentences are varied and constructed for effect, and the facts are admirably selected. The abundance of letters used would have been treated by an ordinary writer in the ordinary way—inserted wholesale, all being presumed to be of equal value. But he has doubled, by the selection of passages chosen with cultivated tact and interwoven with the text. This gift is gained only by long experience and longer study. A more entertaining book than the "*Life of Dickens*" was never written; even the type, paper, and size are exceptional. It forms one of the handsomest works issued in our time. There was, indeed, a complaint that, in the first two volumes, he had made himself too prominent; and I have always fancied that, in the third, he yielded somewhat to this view, and with a loss of effect. On the contrary, the charm of the first volume seemed to be in this constant revelation to a single mind, and the confidential relations between the two showed us Dickens's real character far better than any more conventional communications. His

hopes and fears were thus shown as they rose and fell all through his life ; and the study of two minds thus operating on each other was really interesting, and brought out character effectively. His "Goldsmith," in its last finally revised shape, is a truly wonderful work, for the amount of information it contains and the vast amount of interesting facts given in the notes and text ; all, too, set out in an agreeable style, marked by constant displays of shrewd observation, judgment, and valuable criticism. Any one about to take on himself the duty of writing a memoir may find himself full of reasonable doubts after reading this work, and he will at least learn here the art of judging facts or drawing conclusions from them. His other books—those dealing with the Cromwellian times, the "Life of Landor," etc.—are less attractive, as the subjects are somewhat dry ; but they involved enormous labour, research, and expense. Witness the "Life of Sir John Elliot," based on diaries in a crabbed old English hand, which had to be deciphered and written out. All his books, too, were models of scientific and logical arrangement. He was fond of that admirable plan of giving at the beginning of his book an abstract of each chapter in due order, also of giving side-notes for each paragraph, besides the fullest possible index at the close. These things are easy to do ; but to do well, so that the abstract shall merely describe the sense, requires time, thought, and judgment, as well as care, pains, and labour.

No man had such enjoyment in society and in gathering his friends about him ; and, when in good spirits, he had a hearty, vigorous humour that was enlivening. He was truly hospitable. At his fine mansion, Palace-Gate House, at Kensington, built

by himself, stored with a well-chosen and interesting collection of modern pictures, it was pleasant to be welcomed by him in his spacious and handsome library. The catalogue of his collection, just completed at his death, filled a closely printed octavo. Here were rare manuscripts—volumes that had belonged to great men—engravings, water-colours, sketches of friends by Maclise and other painters. Hither he would bid his friends and entertain them right hospitably, and on such nights would forget his troubling cough, which harassed him all night long. What pleasant meetings were these! Here we would meet Charles Reade, Robert Browning, Mr. Robert Lytton, the genial, cultivated Elwyn, and, above all, on a rare day, THOMAS CARLYLE. This was a privilege which, as he grew old, was accorded to but few, and I recall certain festal days when it was a sacred custom that the sage of Chelsea should come to dine. Most pleasant were those nights, and delightful to hear his placid, grim comments; while our “dear Foosther,” as he became in that dialect, listened with delight and artfully encouraged. I see him now by the fireside puffing his long pipe, uttering his dry humorous sayings, and hear his quaint phrases and melodious *burr*. Sometimes he rose to vehemence.

He was scarcely ever induced to dine out save at one or two houses, and then on a very rare occasion. I am speaking of a time about six or seven years ago. The few that were invited had a rare treat; for the occasion came but once or twice in the year, notably on a Christmas Day, when he went to his old friend's. It was a privilege to be asked to meet him. On this high solemnity a servant was despatched to purchase and select with care a yard-long “church-

warden," with a screw of the seer's favourite tobacco, our host finding a pleasure and sacrifice in thus consenting to what was perhaps odious to him. On this high solemnity we would have Browning or Reade, or it might be the present Lord Lytton. And after dinner the sage drew in his chair, and the "churchwarden" being lit, a picturesque figure enough he looked as he puffed and discoursed his quaint wisdom. Once, an Irish gentleman being present, the state of his country was discussed, whereon the sage thus delivered himself, I recollect well, in his not unmusical tones:

"Ye see the Airish may have their grievances, and they have been hairshly treated; but I tell you, sairs, before I'd listen to one waird from 'em, I'd just, wi' sword and gun, shoot and cut and hew them a' until I'd taught them to respect human life, and give up their murdering. *Then* I'd listen to 'em." The Irish gentleman proceeding to argue that they would not accept the existing domination or be reconciled to it—"Then what would ye propose, sir? There is no remedy," said the sage. "Yes," said the gentleman; "they think you ought to go away—go home." With flashing eyes and fierce burst, "We'll cut a' your throats first!" cried the sage. Those present—Mr. Browning was—will recall the roar which the vehement sally evoked. It was like Johnson assailing Boswell on Scotland before company.

He then went on to dwell in a very interesting way on that country, and the reader will not be surprised to find him deploring the abolition of the Irish Church. He said that the grievance of an educated clergyman in the wilder districts was a wholesome evidence of civilization.

En revanche, as the subject of Ireland is interest-

ing now, the following characteristic "screed" may be given here:—

"DEAR SIR,—

"I am much obliged by your goodness to me. If the French pamphlet is of any value to you, as I suppose likely, then please do not send it hither: I could get little or no use of it, except what is already got, what is implied in your kind offer of it. You mistake much if you consider me blind to the beautiful natural faculties and capabilities of the Irish character, or other than a loving friend to Ireland (from a very old date now), though I may have my own notions as to what would be real friendship to Ireland and what would be only sham friendship.

"Believe me yours,

"With many thanks and wishes,

"T. CARLYLE."

In the drawing-room he would listen with delight to his favourite Scotch songs, sung by a Scotch lady, *illustrating* each with quaint gesture and subdued remarks. His face and figure were truly characteristic and original—grim and grizzled, yet mild and gentle. It was sad to see the decay coming on, after these pleasant days. In this very room again, scene of such hospitality, I met him, one dismal morning, we with others assembled to attend our dear friend to his grave, around us his favourite books, his desk! A year or two later, having a fancy for modelling, I ventured to ask him to let me "do" his fine head, and he consented cheerfully, giving me two hours of his time, descanting on "our *Few* Premier," as he called him, recalling his friend Irving and many more departed. But at that time he seemed

shrunk, chilled inwardly, and suffering. It was the last time that I saw him; but I have the bust, accounted like, arrayed in the favourite broad-brimmed hat.

Once asking our friend and host what his genuine opinion was of Carlyle's style and writing generally, he sent me the following admirable criticism:—

"Don't permit yourself to be laughed out of an honest admiration of Carlyle's way of writing. No doubt it is well to have models of a pure and perfectly correct style (which his is not) for general imitation—for those, that is, who must imitate, and cannot originate. If there were any chance, indeed, of *his* becoming the object of such imitation, the language might soon be corrupted: but there is this protection against such a danger,—that whereas any one, in as far as in him lies, may ground himself upon Swift or Addison, and give to such thoughts as he has the most easy and natural flow of which they are capable, to imitate Carlyle, with nothing of his genius, is to make yourself simply repulsive. The great merit of Carlyle's style is that it so wonderfully reflects the man himself; it is really a part of his individuality—a part of that quality in a man which marks him out for the chance of surviving his generation. You have but to talk with Mr. Carlyle himself for an hour to see that he does not put it on as an actor would his dress, but that his thoughts take (for the most part) necessarily that form, and *involuntarily* move in harmonious, but often very abrupt numbers. If he were a more logical reasoner he would probably be a clearer writer, but if he gets his result he cares little by what means—and, like Luther's, his words are less arguments than blows. The final test, after all, is

whether a man's style helps him to the very best method of saying what he has to say ; and in this case I think it does, and that the meaning would be less perfect even if the brevity, abruptness, and indefiniteness were wholly away. There never was such a style for pictures. 'The French Revolution' is quite marvellous in that respect. Even without the connections and explanations that might have been thought absolutely essential, the succession of scenes flash all their philosophy and meaning into you as if by intuition ; and I have often thought that old Samuel Johnson must have had writing of this sort in view, when he told Boswell one day that he fancied mankind might come in time to write all aphoristically, growing weary of preparation, and connection, and illustration, and all those arts by which a big book is made. Nor let me conclude this brief and hasty note on a writer of the truest genius without saying that I hold him—however grotesque or uncouth he may sometimes seem to be—for one of the greatest masters of English now living. He can write sentences heavier with thought, richer with humour, and of deeper pathos, than any other man, though he never lays himself out for mere writing. His narrative of the flight and capture of Varennes was never excelled—seldom I think equalled—for vigour, animation, and enthralling interest. Nor can any man, in my opinion, blend in the same passage so many opposite yet quite natural qualities—the earnest with the sarcastic, the jocular and pathetic. But here I am in danger of repeating what I have already sufficiently said ; but if you compare some of his earlier essays (his life of Schiller, for instance, or such papers as his first on Voltaire) with his later things, you may be interested to observe how his later style has grown

upon him with the growth and enlargement of his mind. As to his estimation or 'true appreciation' of his work here in England, it has greatly increased of late years, if you measure it by the sale of his works. But, as happens with all men of originality, especially when they run amuck at everybody, and delight never so much as when in a minority of one (which is too much Carlyle's weakness), his detractors are as fierce as his disciples are earnest. Opinion about him will always be so divided, but I should say that, while few of the old school tolerate him at all, most men that have entered literature more recently, and are thoughtful men, admire and profit by him. At our universities he has made considerable way; and you would probably observe, the other day, that his 'Cromwell' was made a class-book with Guizot's in Sir James Stephen's 'Examination for Modern History.'

I always relished hugely, as having an olive-like taste, one of the best specimens of his humour, that letter to the Scotch boot and shoe maker at Charing Cross. What gives me a more particular interest in the matter is that I had heard him descant on the decay of shoemaking. It was like a bit of the "Sartor;" and he would tell "hoo there was a mon i' Doomfrees, who mad' me shoes the like o' which the world had never seen. And when I cam' bock in eight years, I took him the shoes," etc. Read by this light, how quaint is the following, nor do I wonder that the worldly handicraftsman makes it as widely known as he can.

"To Mr. Dowie, Boot and Shoe Maker, Charing Cross (or whatever the right address is).

"DEAR SIR,

"Not for your sake alone, but for that

of a public suffering much in its *feet*, I am willing to testify that you have yielded me complete and unexpected relief in that particular ; and, in short, on trial after trial, that you seem to me to possess, in signal contrast to so very many of your brethren, the actual *art of making shoes which are easy to the wearer*. My thanks to you are emphatic and sincere.

"T. CARLYLE.

"5, Cheyne Row, Chelsea, 10th July, 1868."

CHAPTER VI.

BEHIND THE SCENES.

AFTER all, the truest fascination is in the drama and in being connected with the stage. As of old the green curtains, the smell of sawdust and oranges, and the lampblackened bills, the ink of which came off on the gloves, had this charm, so now the gossip concerning actors, the new theatres, and new scenery and plays have a certain indescribable attraction. At this moment of writing, somewhat *blasé* as one is after a good many campaigns, I know nothing that gives such secret pleasure as, in a daily walk through the Strand, to see one's name to a little piece on the board that reclines against the entrance to the playhouse. Every night to know that some hundreds are listening to *your* thunder, ay, and laughing heartily—this is a pleasing, complacent thought. Such is true publicity. How pleasant, too, the rehearsals ; the *demi-jour* of the stage in the morning ; the carpenters busy hammering at the scenes laid flat on the floor ; the passing in by the mysterious hatch of the stage

—delightful privilege!—greeted by the crabbed old Cerberus, who is invariably on guard! Who does not like actors? They are always agreeable and good-humoured and good-natured. Actresses are for the most part inferior, but indeed there are so few worthy of the name, though there are quantities of “ladies on the stage,” but very few actresses. Irving, Toole, Lionel Brough, Farren, to take a few specimens, are men of force of character. Of those who are passed away, who was like Charles Mathews? How airy, how delightful was his talk! His tongue seemed to trip over all subjects with a French grace. I did not know him very intimately, but there was no one one would have liked to have cultivated more. His remarks had a quaint flavour. I see him sitting in a chair before me, telling some pleasant story, his cab waiting. Our acquaintance began in an odd way.

Once I was writing a series of criticisms on all the leading performers of the day, and these appeared month by month. In one of these rather juvenile performances—perhaps jejune also—I had taken occasion to object to his reading of Balzac's *Mercadet*, which, after seeing *Got*, appeared somewhat airy and not tragic enough. The good and sound critic of the *Observer* was the first to find fault with my view, while in that paper I came forward to vindicate it.

“As regards *Mercadet*,” I said, “and Mr. Mathews, we are on other ground, and I differ totally from your critic. This is a subject where there can be little or no dispute; and really your critic has himself disposed of the matter, for he says that Mr. Mathews took care to avoid anything tragic in his view of the character. This English conception is utterly foreign to the whole meaning

of the piece, and a student of Balzac would only smile, or rather groan, to see a subject worthy of Æschylus nicely trimmed and polished into a gay, farcical piece of comedy, to be glided over by the pleasant and ever-juvenile Charles. 'A version of Balzac from the Charles Mathews point of view,' says your critic—'a great play, should be fitted, like a garment, to the ways and humour of a particular actor.' This statement alone would show how erroneous the theory is. Let any one who, however deficient in dramatic knowledge, has studied his Balzac conscientiously, explain what Mercadet is. Imagine some great English speculator, living in princely style, to have staked nearly all his fortune on some Stock Exchange operation, the result of which he cannot know until, say, to-morrow. To-day he is giving a State dinner-party to lords and great political men, and one of the former he hopes to secure for his daughter. Imagine him through the dinner smiling ghastly smiles, affecting merriment, telling stories; imagine, too, the sickly agitation of his heart! No more tragic situation could be conceived. We should smile to think of Charles Mathews, with all his gifts, portraying such a character. Yet this is Balzac's Mercadet! This is the Mercadet of Got and the great French actors; this is the tradition of the great Théâtre Français, where they religiously preserve the author's traditions; and this, as any reader of Balzac feels by instinct, is Balzac himself. Instead of this we have—what? The great play adapted in twenty-four hours, or some such time, by 'Slingsby Laurence,' Mr. G. H. Lewes, who, excellent critic as he is, is yet the author of some indifferent novels, and is by no means guaranteed against failure in dramatic matters. Then we hear of Got's having one way

of interpreting the character and Mr. Mathews another; *i.e.* a tragic and a comic way. When French pieces are every day put forward as being 'by' the adapters and translators, there is nothing out of keeping in a great piece like Balzac's being pared down and altered so as to suit the 'touch-and-go' style of a rattling comedian. But to return whence I started. Your critic might find in the essays which I have written on the various actors something not unprofitable. In spite of a few mistakes I venture to say that the principles they contain are sound, and impartial judges might hold that they are at least carefully considered and equal to those current. I will be generous, and say I think your critic's performances are superior to the average.

"THE AUTHOR OF THE ARTICLES."

This criticism, as it stands, seems to me to commend itself. In the following week the lively Charles himself rushed into the arena, and in a warm letter, of good length, assailed his assailant. Here are some extracts from this amusing composition.

"I claim," he said, "to assert that I have not mistaken Balzac's idea, . . . for I defy the writer or any one else to show the slightest pretence that Balzac has afforded for any such view. That it may be the Mercadet of *Got* I don't dispute, but that it is the Mercadet of the great French actors I deny." He then goes on to state that the only other actor who played it in Paris, Geoffroy, was so far from taking a lachrymose view of the character, that he made it a sort of off-hand Robert Macaire. "Is the gentleman who makes these assertions aware that the great Théâtre Français *refused* Balzac's piece, that it was never acted there till twenty years after the actor's

death, and that consequently it could not have been in possession of any of his traditions?" He adds that it was put into dramatic shape by D'Ennery, and that I was not justified in asserting that it was the Mercadet of Balzac.

"I am perfectly convinced of two things. First, that the writer never saw the 'Game of Speculation' at all, and that he never read Balzac's original play.

"As to the tragic view of the idea, it is simply ridiculous. M. Got has no greater admirer than myself, but if he takes a tragic view of the character and plays it with pathos, in my humble opinion he has for once made a mistake. Mercadet is depicted by Balzac as a hard, sarcastic man of the world, stopping at no baseness, revelling in falsehood. Fancy such a man being portrayed from a tragic point of view! Fancy Jeremy Diddler crying while endeavouring to do Sam the waiter out of his tenpence." He then asks, How can his hypocritical tears with the asides, "He's yielding!" be reconciled with tragedy? *

There was, however, a curious "note" in his character which many must have remarked. Vivacious and hard hitting as he could be, he was in truth timorous, and as soon as he had made the stroke, "back recoiled," alarmed at "the sound himself had made." Almost with the publication in the newspaper, a letter reached me of a different complexion:

* Mr. Dutton Cook has, curiously enough, just discussed this question in his recently published "Hours with the Players." It will be seen at once that the actor misapprehended the point, his mistake turning on the meaning of "tragic." Tragedy, that is, a bitter earnestness, must certainly underlie even the buffoonery and jesting that he speaks of. Such a scheming speculator, had he power at all, must have felt his desperate situation, as he found his edifice toppling. He was playing his last stake.

"37, Half-Moon Street, December 10th, 1872.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"The first lawyers in the land bully each other in public, and then walk off together arm-in-arm to dinner, the best friends in the world. With such high precedents, I address you as a man and a brother, and boldly ask you, as a favour to me, to do in earnest what I only proposed in jest, viz. to come and see the 'Game of Speculation.' I will keep you a stall for any night this week you will select. You write too well not to make it a laudable ambition to obtain your honest and, if possible, revised criticism. I promise to play the part exactly as I have always done, and if, after seeing it patiently from beginning to end, you still condemn, I will meekly bow my head and regret my inability to please you; while, should I succeed in inducing you to change your opinion, I shall feel sincere pride in causing you to modify your verdict.

"I give you my word that I do not know whom I am addressing, beyond the fact of your being the author of the papers in question; but, as a writer worthy of attention, I am naturally anxious to obtain your matured criticism, which I hope you will as freely give as I will resignedly receive.

"My dear sir, faithfully yours,

"C. J. MATHEWS.

"I find I have written on two sheets of paper. I will not re-copy—it may make my request the more emphatic."

This little discussion—not unpleasant—made us friends. I accepted his stall, though his charge of my never having seen him in the part was unfounded, and went to the performance. There was

something quaint in the idea of his playing to his unknown critic, thus asked to revise his judgment. Of course, in the case of so admirable a veteran, one was not to stand on a conscientious rigour. A cordial letter was despatched to him, with some acknowledgment of hasty judgment and of great admiration.

But, in truth, what an extraordinary charm there is in the stage and in all that concerns actors. I never can look on an actor without a certain reverence, and without calling up the wonderful fairyland in which they move and have their being by night. There they always seem to lose their earthiness, hackneyed as the spectacle is.

What shall be said of dramatic criticism generally? In fairness it must be owned that the average critic is cruelly hampered, and in certain papers it is rather difficult to give a true verdict according to the evidence. In some instances the proprietor is *lit* with the theatre, or knows the manager. His play must not, therefore, be abused. I confess that there are cases, when one thinks of the vast outlay in dresses, mounting, and salaries that has been incurred on some play, that it seems almost cruelty to assail the performance. Some explanation, too, may be found in the fact that nowadays the essential part for the public is *the show*, not the play. The critic's position is embarrassing; and, I must say, many extricate themselves with skill, contriving to praise a good deal, and good-naturedly deprecate defects as if they were spots on the sun. They are, with one or two exceptions, good-natured, and are never "down" on a writer, where they see good intentions and a genuine attempt at work. Most are really cultivated men, and know the principles of their art thoroughly.

Doctors and critics disagree, and once I could not resist publishing, in the *St. James's Gazette*, as a little bit of raillery—harmless enough—a collection of these opposing judgments. The occasion was the performance of Modjeska in Juliet, and I assumed the character of a visitor from Little Pedlington sent to London to make out what was *really* thought of her.

"I was able to get away last week from Little Pedlington for a couple of days—from Saturday till Monday. At the station I met Yawkins, formerly of the circulating library, but now managing our theatre with much spirit, and who said to me, 'I wish you to go and see the new foreign actress, Modjeska, and find out what is thought of her, and if she would go down in Little Pedlington.' He added that if she did, he would not mind giving the highest salary ever given in Little Pedlington—namely, £3 a night; that is, for a single night. It is this sort of prompt spirit that has distinguished Yawkins's management. 'Find out exactly what the London press thinks,' he went on; 'for I don't go much by what our local organs say, or indeed their London correspondents.' And I fancy myself it would be foolish to 'go much,' or even a little, on the reports of these latter gentlemen, whom we all knew as regular residents at Little Pedlington, which, by the way, is pronounced Li'pleton. His idea was sound. The London press and London critics would be the best guides in the case of the Modjeska. I went to see her; waited impatiently, and next day consulted them all patiently.

"The first I took up—and took up eagerly—was the *Daily Telegraph*. In an instant my doubts were confirmed. It was but a partial success—the first portion good, the second bad. The balcony

scene beautiful and inartificial. 'It is not,' I read, 'a tricky scene of theatrical flirtation. . . . All was natural, charming, and graceful here, and seldom have the mere artifices of acting been so well disguised.' It was 'charming, ideal, and poetical.' Modjeska was, in short, 'a Juliet that thoroughly satisfied to the close of the balcony scene, flickered, waned, and died out before the end. Gradually she lost her influence and ascendancy. A certain monotony prevailed, and grew till it became distracting.' This was all clear and distinct: there could be no mistake in so positive a judgment; and, looking back, I began to see the thing as he so described it. It did flicker, and die out towards the end. We all felt the growing monotony until it became distracting. I knew now what I would tell Yawkins; first glancing at one or two of the others—say the *Morning Post*, organ of the aristocracy. But what was this? 'In no respect could it be accounted a success.' It was all 'strained, cold, artificial, destitute of grace, and fraught with no true passion.' Her English was 'flawed and fractured.' In the balcony scene, 'Juliet was manifestly conscious of the presence of some hundreds of spectators, to whom, much more than to her enraptured lover, she addressed her appeals.' Heavens! Why, had not the other said that the balcony scene was all natural and graceful, and without artifice?

"Well, here is a paper written by revolutionaries for revolutionists, and likely to take a firm unpromising view. It considers it 'one of the most interesting experiments our stage ever witnessed. No one could have anticipated *the success* that was achieved.' There! then it *was* successful. The balcony scene 'supreme tenderness.' (Ah! then it *wasn't* artificial.) And 'the entire per-

formance, whether in the delicacy of the *early scenes*, or *intensity of the latter*, is alike admirable, and full of beauty and charged with passion.' Come, come, this is better. But how about the 'monotony' and failure of the last portion—the 'consciousness of the presence of the audience'—the 'flickering out.' Stay: here is *Truth*. 'A most gracious and graceful lady, certainly, and a very sincere and industrious artist; but one who *had no electricity* in her touch. Juliet exhibits this clever lady at her best and at her worst. She can suggest, but she cannot sustain. Her style is poetical and pure, but her power is easily spent. As she floats through the earlier acts in those gauzy robes, she is as pleasant to the eye as an escaped butterfly on a spring morning, but when the test-acts of Juliet come, the *actress is nowhere*. Her strength is never spontaneous; her power, such as it is, is an obvious effort.' Upset again! I am growing bewildered. 'Actress nowhere: no electricity'—but the others said she *had*. Ah! I fear she can't do. The *St. James's Gazette* will say the same. 'Her interpretation of it was an exquisitely finished whole, everywhere marked by originality. . . . And in the balcony scene in the next act she gave full and admirable expression to the voluptuous nature, the passionate sensibility, combined with maiden innocence, and marred by *no touch of self-consciousness* or coyness or coquetry. So, too, in the third act, the morning after her marriage, the "sweet, girlish lingering, and busy movement" of the hapless bride were charmingly rendered.' But then she fell off at the end—'was nowhere' in the tragic portion. But the 'shuddering horror with which she thinks of her being laid in the tomb, culminating in the appalling vision which she conjures up of "the bloody Tybalt" seek-

ing out Romeo—in all this Mdme. Modjeska certainly showed herself a tragedian of no mean order. . . . So much must suffice as to the new Juliet. It is not enough to do her justice. But it may be enough to convey some faint impression of the highly finished and artistic character of her impersonation.' Oh, this is conclusive—the rest were all wrong. But I may as well look at the *Standard*: 'On the whole, she perhaps agreeably surprised the more judicious of her admirers; but it cannot be called an unmitigated triumph.' What a *douche*—how chilling and distrustful! 'Exceedingly graceful and charming she was in the balcony scene, but not wholly spontaneous: there was something 'artificial.' One did not feel that 'she was under the spell of overwhelming love.' The last critic speaks of 'passionate sensibility,' with 'no touch of self-consciousness;' and yet the other talks of artificiality and something 'not wholly spontaneous'—'it was in the later and more powerful scenes she did best;' 'not until the potion scene did she create anything like enthusiasm.' Yet the *Telegraph* critic says she fell off, and so does *Truth*.

"Stay: now for the *Globe*. 'Few suspected how much illumination she would cast on it. It was obvious that the light of a clever and exquisitely feminine perception had been brought to bear on it.' As the play proceeded, 'a new revelation was to be afforded.' The love-scenes in the balcony were 'immured in tones of delicious tenderness. From first to last she carried the audience with her.' Yet his predecessor said it was not until the potion scene that she succeeded in raising enthusiasm. Still he qualifies his praise. It was 'not complete,' he says, 'and it lacked the flavour of girlhood.'

"But to go on. The *Morning Advertiser* found it 'not an emanation of commanding genius.' There was a certain suggestion of preparation—and, strangest of all (what all the fault-finders had been satisfied with), 'the potion scene was a little forced.' On the other hand, 'the balcony scene was given with a refined charm and delicacy we have never seen surpassed.' More rapturous still the *Echo*: 'It will rank as one of her finest impersonations. The living, moving embodiment of loving, unfortunate Juliet is before the audience.' Further, she triumphed over 'difficulties of the English.' Come, come, this is comforting; and perhaps on the whole—— Ah! the *Daily News*. 'It was not wanting,' he says, 'in force, refinement, or depth of feeling, though it can hardly be said to be distinguished by girlish impulse.' The balcony scene was 'full of subtle touches.' Cold again: only 'subtle touches.' Her utterance, too, was 'indistinct.' My *Echo* friend thought she triumphed over the difficulties of the English. The *Sunday Times* can only say that her Juliet was of 'surpassing and many gifts,' without going into particulars. The *Observer's* critic, for whom I have a sincere respect, declares that in the balcony scene she showed 'exquisite delicacy and grace.' But there was 'no spontaneity or girlish impulse.' On the other hand, the first act is 'less within her range than the potion scene.'

"But I grow bewildered as these various judges crowd upon me and thrust their contradictory verdicts in my face. The *Athenæum* holds that in the earlier scenes she stirs the spectator, and in the later fails to recommend herself. The balcony scene, however, 'never possessed more enchantment.' There is much 'freshness,' but 'little girlishness or impulse.' I turn to my

Saturday Review for light, and find, to my amazement, that she 'lacks freshness.' 'In the potion scene she finally persuaded us that Juliet is a character she should never attempt to personate. The eccentricities of the performance seem to us monotonous and dispiriting in the highest degree.' 'Seldom,' says C. S., in the *Illustrated London News*, 'has such a fragrant sense of poetry been instilled into the opening scenes.' The *Whitehall Review* holds that she had all the *naïveté* and freshness of a young girl by whom love was first welcomed. She was 'wayward,' natural, etc. Yet another paper and another verdict: 'As to what are usually considered the two best scenes—the balcony and the sleeping-draught scenes—*there can be no two opinions whatever*: there is all the tender poetic feeling that can be desired in the one and all the dramatic intensity in the other.' Rachel might not have disdained to learn from 'the potion scene.' 'Creditable,' but 'not a success,' says the *Academy*. 'Juliet's girlish rapture' (mark!) she is unable to exhibit. 'On the other hand,' urges the *Graphic*, 'the suddenness of her girlish love and all its absorbing truthfulness are depicted with a very natural truth. All through the act of the balcony scene her delivery was remarkably free from the errors of accent and emphasis.' Yet another, the clever 'D. C.,' in the *World*, calling a spade a spade, thus breaks out:—'She is a conventional and artificial actress, gifted, graceful, and accomplished, well qualified to present the heroines of modern drama, able at times to display vehemence of a special kind, but absolutely incompetent to cope with the heroines of Shakspeare. As Juliet, her airs of ingenuousness become almost grimaces, her smiles degenerate into smirks; she would render the juvenility

of the character by crossing the stage now and again with a certain skipping, ambling, skittish gait; she cannot reconcile the apparent inconsistency of Juliet's intensity of passion and innateness of purity. In her hands Juliet's love for Romeo declines into an intrigue; it is attended by so much calmness and calculation, it is so completely made a matter of deliberation and self-consciousness. *Of the wild transport of sudden love*, the intoxication of a first passion, *no suggestions are forthcoming*. In fine, Mdme. Modjeska's Juliet lacks youth and truth, nature, freshness, passion, and poetry.'

"Now, I wish to know, what am I to say to Yawkins when I get back to Little Pedlington? How can this lady be all this at once? 'Girlish,' and yet 'old and conventional;' 'fresh,' and yet 'lacking freshness;' exactly Shakspeare's Juliet, and yet utterly unsuited to Shakspeare; speaking English clearly, and yet utterly unintelligible; excellent at the beginning and falling off at the end; excellent at the end, but not at the beginning; good in the potion scene and bad in the balcony one; good in the balcony one, but bad in the other, etc. Please, sir, help me."

CHAPTER VII.

THE DIARY.

THAT invaluable private friend and confidant, the DIARY, should be "entreated" by every literary man. Nothing is more useful. I do not mean one of those ridiculous records of Nothings—"Walked out; *paid bills*; dinner, roast mutton;

Smith called; spoke to James about the water-pipes, etc." As I have hitherto done in these confessions, I will illustrate this by my own practice. A "Letts's Diary" should be kept for official entries of absences and returns, and of other various important acts—payments, etc., and even of dinings out, the company met, etc. Such things are useful, and show how life has gone by. But the real sort of diary, and which I have tried to keep, is not ordered on such regular principles. In it is entered everything of interest that occurs: "ideas" that may occur to the mind, thoughts, speculations—all set down as shortly as possible, a habit gained by practice; descriptions of little scenes visited, which gave pleasure, and which offered something remarkable; the curious little incidents which occur occasionally or are related by others; and those good stories—*bon mots*—we often hear, and which, being unprinted, are often lost. It is astonishing what a pleasant, valuable (to one's self) collection is thus made. As I have said, too, practice furnishes the shortest but most sufficient mode of setting down these matters. A few well-chosen words will reveal a whole scene. This is, of course, a very different thing from the Diaries of Moore, Crabbe, Robinson, and others, professedly written for publication, and which are really "books." The value of a diary, too, is in its opportunity for setting down the curious little adventures and mishaps—not very important certainly—we all encounter. These are forgotten: but there is no doubt one who "goes about a good deal," and keeps his eyes open, sees a good many strange things, and—forgets them.

Take house-hunting. What singular people one meets! what surprises, pleasant and disagreeable! Once, when looking for a house at Chiselhurst,

I was directed to a charming villa, exquisitely furnished and decorated. Being shown over, I find the young ladies busy with their governess, but astonished at the inspection: difficulties made as to showing the bedrooms by the seemingly bewildered maid: everything, after stern examination, found complete and even elegant, yet the price absurdly low. It was the *wrong house!* It belonged to very opulent people, gone into town, and who would be confounded to learn that their house "was to be let." The scene was like a bit of comedy. Here are some other scenes dramatic in their way. Thus, when engaged in this pursuit, I met with an eminently desirable investment near, say, Wilton Crescent—everything in the house-taking or house-letting direction is "desirable"—which was "dirt cheap" at one thousand pounds premium, and one hundred and fifty pounds per annum. The locality was aristocratic. Still, for such an outlay, there was an air of "squeeze." The hall was as a little tunnei. But, subject to these narrow conditions, there was an elegant air about the tenement, even in spite of the stair, which was like a ladder leading to a loft. A distinguished-looking menial, powdered, led the way. He assumed that the tenant was a visitor; at least, he would not see him in the other light. He threw open the drawing-room door, announced him by his name, and threw the rest of the degrading office on those whom it most concerned. He made some remark about "a pusson," and retired. Now this was what I saw as I entered. A richly dressed lady, good-looking, and with two or three children about her, was at the fire, busy, I think, with some department of their toilet. A maid aide-de-camp was in attendance. The room seemed handsome, with a great deal of velvet and gilding. I never

shall forget the haughty and angry stare she gave me.

"What do you want?" she said. "What is this?"

The tenant faltered out some explanation, at the same time tendering the order which the agent, or some one else, had drawn in his favour.

"*Oh, more of Mr. Wilkinson's doings,*" the haughty lady said, turning to her attendant, her eyes flashing and her cheeks flushing. "It is intolerable. This house, sir, is *not* to be let. I shall *not* give my consent to it. It's quite a mistake—I shall *not* stir out of it. It is getting intolerable."

Rather bewildered, the desirable tenant, seeing himself quite undesirable, protested he would not wish to be the cause of such discordant views between the two persons most concerned, and withdrew hurriedly, the lady rustling her stiff silk, fuming, and darting fierce looks at an imaginary Mr. Wilkinson. There was a whole story behind that significant little episode.

One of the most curious features in these visits was the surprise, as the servant rashly showed you into the midst of some highly domestic scene; an entire family at lunch, for instance, a very fat leg of mutton steaming on the board, black bottles, sentry-wise, scattered up and down the table. The resentful looks at being thus surprised were indescribable; the family indignation, strange to say, passing entirely over their own menial, whose fault it was, and settling on the desirable tenant.

I recall another awkward intrusion, where a pale sickly lady was discovered, with a bearded man on his knees before her, who rose and asked angrily "what I wanted there." To enter into explanation that "you came to see the house"

appeared too absurd—the best thing to do was to withdraw abruptly. A good-natured but untidy maid-of-all-work explained confidentially “that it was Mr. and Mrs. Littlejohn, who had at last come together, and Miss Mew had put them in the front parlour for the day.” I felt that a mansion hallowed by such a sacred reconciliation was not to be lightly profaned, so I took my way hurriedly from the place.

Another little incident. Not very long ago, passing through Deptford, nautically flavoured, with a friend, I noted an ugly bull-dog, ill-favoured, with the usual patch on his eye, and a strap doing duty as a collar. He had come up a lane, and was walking on briskly in front, turning occasionally to give a short bark at some one, no doubt, following—his master possibly. But, presently, as we turned to the right or left, it was clear he was doing the same: his greetings, still kept up, were addressed to us. For an experiment we tried turning back, or striking suddenly down a lane; he would turn back as hurriedly, and was beside us in an instant. A mile and more had been thus covered. It was clear the odious animal was resolute to hold by us. We were now far from his native home; the evening was drawing on. We were about to walk to London, and it seemed something ghostly or hobgoblinish that this unclean spirit should thus haunt us. He would probably beset the hall-door—rush in at its first opening. If we took the Greenwich tram-car, he would, no doubt, race the whole way. Nothing was more curious than the tenacity with which he kept by us; if we lagged, he waited in the middle of the road. He disdained threats; he belonged to us by adoption, or rather we to him.

What was to be done? Suddenly an idea

occurred. Here was a coal-store, with a small door in the greater door, fortunately half open. With an affectation of curiosity, as if to see the yard, we entered. The brute, some way on before, instantly marked it, and returned with all speed to see what was the delay. The moment he entered the coal-store, we issued forth, and hurriedly closing the door after us, posted away. However, a crowd of little boys was to be noted, attracted by the odd, mysterious nature of the proceeding. Not an instant was to be lost; fortunately here were some of those curious windings of Greenwich town, into which we struck, out of the high road. And not an instant too soon; for the prying boys had opened the door, out of which our enemy leaped and set off in pursuit of his companions. Looking up the retired lane, we saw him scamper by at full speed, his eager eyes ranging in all directions save one. We were saved, and never saw him more!

Again, lately one dark night, entering a Hansom cab, I was duly encased within the glass and shutters. As the vehicle shot off on its course, something white appeared to flash on the foot-board in front, which by-and-by resolved itself into the outline of a greyish-white cur dog, who had leaped up in a half-professional way, much as the little tigers of another generation used to skip up behind the cabriolet. There this curious creature remained, poising itself at the edge, like some spectral dog, and balancing itself with ease, as a circus rider might. When the cab stopped, he was gone as suddenly as he came. "Oh! he were there, were he?" the driver merely exclaimed, in answer to a question. It turned out that this lean and unkempt pariah had drawn near the cab a few nights before, had received less churlish

greeting than what he was accustomed to, and had attached himself to the cab in this mysterious way. He was now actually to be seen hovering in the shadow afar off. There was something ghostly in the fashion in which he came out of the night and appeared upon the footboard. I was once acquainted with a dog that had a no less singular *penchant* for seeing a train pass under an arch at a particular hour each day. Punctually at five o'clock he would rouse himself and set off at full speed to keep his appointment, using cunning devices when he suspected he might be detained. Having seen his train go by, and looked down with a wary and critical air to watch that the passage was performed properly, he jogged home with a contented mind. The mystery was how he knew the hour so exactly.

Again, every morning there comes to the door a little trap, in the service of the buttermilk. It is drawn by a frisky, waggish little pony, evidently a pet; and on the pony's back rides a vivacious little terrier, who, from practice, can balance himself in a secure and dashing style. Both pony and terrier understand each other, though the terrier capers about the pony's neck in an inconvenient fashion. On cold days pony has his cloth, while the terrier has a miniature covering of the same kind, securely fitted to his person. When the buttermilk comes up the area the sly pair are watching him, and if in his hurry he incautiously slam the back-door of his cart, a pretence is made of accepting the noise as a signal, and off starts the pony galloping, the terrier barking and almost erect on pony's neck, while the driver is running along frantically striving to climb into his vehicle as it goes. Another dog, a red Irish retriever, whose ac-

quaintance I made lately, was sent down forty miles into Kent, shut up in a dog-box. On his first day's sport, he took offence at the keeper's using a whip to him: a freedom he perhaps thought was not justified by so short an acquaintance. The following morning he was at the door of his house in Victoria Street! How was this accomplished? He must have come straight across the country, guided by some faculty that his two-legged superiors have not.

A favourite dog was accidentally killed; on which the poetical gardener in our family wrote an epitaph:

"Beneath this yew-tree, in this Oval *so completely*,
Lies Hector, our dog, whom his master loved dearly.
He barked and he yeowled when the children went a-walking;
He was shot by Peter on Christmas morning.
I blame Archie Tobin for not feeding him regularly,
And Mullins at the gate, who was in the constabulary."

As to letters. Many people destroy every letter that is not important, or relating to business. Not long before his death, Mr. Dickens thus sacrificed all his accumulated papers, which made a remarkable collection of interesting autographs, and, in actual money, worth a great deal. The dilemma is, unless you destroy at once, you must keep; for it is difficult to find time, and the task is distasteful also, to go over an enormous mass of papers. A good plan is to put aside, as they arrive, anything of interest or from interesting people. Acting on this principle, one may form a very entertaining volume or collection of volumes, the letters being from all sorts of persons. It is astonishing how excellent and entertaining some letters are, and how admirably written; and I have noted that clever *littérateurs* write their letters as though they were writing "copy,"

possibly because they cannot resist the inspiration. Mr. Sala and Mr. Burnard are of this class, and their letters are ever full of spirit and wit and gaiety. The former's beautiful penmanship is well known, and is the delight of the printers, as my own, I fear, is the reverse.

It is astonishing what an interesting and entertaining gathering may be thus made. In the large volumes before me I find letters from every writer of note—novelists, poets, players, statesmen, musicians; and as most of these persons have had their portraits given in illustrated papers, these I have set opposite, so that face, handwriting, and mind are there before me. Nothing, too, is more agreeable, when engaged on a literary task, than to see how cordially your brethren come to your aid with such knowledge as falls within their department, communicated in a pleasant style.

It is curious what odd incidents turn up in one's literary course. Once, having written a series of Italian sketches, duly published, I was astonished to see, in a well-known journal, a full description of some ceremony at St. Peter's, taken textually from my series, but "written by an architect who was studying there." On pointing this out to the editor, the following explanation was sent by its author:—

"I have this morning received a letter, saying the shell has burst which I have expected so long. I wrote the 'Easter at Rome.'

"I am in verity an architectural student, and was busy all that week doing the sights like everybody else, and then was bound to write an account home of them; so, like a schoolboy, having read your Roman paper, I thought it very good—that it would interest my father and mother, and

save me lots of time and bother, answering every purpose. An original account would have been awfully dry. I need hardly say I never had the slightest conception it would ever cross the threshold of our house. That would have been too green, as I had also interpolated passages from 'Rubicond Murray' and Dickens.

"It was a common thing for the fellows at the Caffé Greco, when they wanted to fill a letter, to write a page of Murray; but that's no excuse for me.

"I did not hear till I was in Naples that it had been sent to the papers and published; and I have felt like Damocles ever since. I was dreadfully vexed, but hoped it might blow over.

"I regret exceedingly if it has caused you any annoyance, and am heartily sorry for it, but it was quite unintentional. I have also written to the editor of the journal to explain.

"Therefore I hope you will accept my apology, and say no more about it; though, as I have made a fool of myself, I will only subscribe myself your obedient servant."

It is not to be supposed that "Grub Street" and its privations, and the struggles for existence—"garret toil and London loneliness"—must be put back to the days of Johnson and Savage. There are innumerable instances of desperate battle and piteous succumbing, as every literary worker knows from the appeals sent to him. Sometimes it comes to a terrible crisis, in many instances drink unfortunately helping or leading to the catastrophe. I am not speaking now of the almost professional out-of-elbows writer, who really lives and thrives in a sort of fashion, but of the genuine hard worker, with the traditional wife and four or six children. Not long ago came a despairing, plead-

ing letter from such a one, a clever man, on whom an execution was impending; if it fell, destruction was the result. The sum, however, was too large, and only a contribution could be made to it. He contrived to surmount his difficulties.

But here was a truly dramatic instance. Some years ago, when Homburg was in the flush of all its gaieties, I met there a good-looking gentleman—a leading writer on the press, a poet, with a university education—altogether a very accomplished and agreeable person. He was, indeed, rather *recherché*. I had before known of him, as he had of me, and we became friends. I lost sight of him, as one so often does of hastily made watering-place acquaintances—the duration being in proportion to the intensity. Later, I heard he had gone to the war as a correspondent. Later again by some years, I read an inquest on a person who had died in the most abject condition in one of those lodging-houses where fourpence is charged for a night's accommodation. A letter was found in his pocket from a gentleman, a son of a nobleman and an old friend—a touching, manly production—enclosing some money, adding that he could do little for him, but begging him, if in worse difficulties, to apply to his friend. It proved to be my old acquaintance, who had sunk lower and lower, and, being afflicted with some dreadful malady and without friends, had chosen to hide himself in this squalid place, and there had died! Lately there was an eminent scholar thus reduced. No one who is connected with the societies formed for helping literary men is surprised by these things, so strange and unexpected are the applications. The truth is the competition is so great that, if there be any interruption, by illness or otherwise,

their place is likely to be filled up. On the other hand, connection with the press is a laborious business, and leaves little time for magazine or novel writing.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE STORY OF A WALTZ.

IN a career of hard work, and often of drudgery, there arises sometimes little strange unexpected turns of fortune, not very marvellous of their kind, but still welcome and encouraging, and often flavoured with a little romance. I have noted lately, in those colloquial columns of gossip which are a special feature of the newspapers of the time, allusions to a certain waltz, which came into existence under odd circumstances. Now, it may be found entertaining to relate what really took place.

Of waltzes the world is full, and overstocked it may be. The amateur writes his waltz, of which a copy is never sold. The professional musician brings out his waltz, which may not take, or drops still-born. Waldteufel, and Strauss, and Gungl, Coote and Tinney, and Godfrey are or were past masters in the art, and they command a sale. A true waltz, such as Waldteufel, the most popular now, writes, is a poem, and might engage the talent of the first composers. There is infinite art and dramatic feeling required, a melancholy despairing strain, strange to say, best quickening the dancers' motions; there is the artful contrast of rough and uninteresting passages introduced like bitters, so as to make return to the more exquisite

bits longed for and welcomed when they do arrive. On this account there are but few really good waltzes. Sometimes a popular and good air will carry the whole waltz through, and the taking tune of Mr. Sullivan's "Sweethearts"—a song turned into a waltz—has formed one of the most successful of this day. The "Soldaten Lieder," the "Beautiful Blue Danube," are perfect poems in their way, and have been little fortunes to their publishers—probably not to their authors.

Half a dozen years ago, I was getting ready for Christmas, that is to say, for furnishing those jovial festival stories which were until lately as indispensable as the plum-pudding on the day itself. Now these matters seem to be avoided. There are no outcast brothers to come home exactly on Christmas Eve in the snow, and look in at the squire's window—the Hall—where everybody is merry-making. There are no making-ups of old enemies, and the like, all which have gone out. But still a certain amount of jovial narrative is in demand, for annuals and the like. Being busy one October night with this sort of provender, a letter came in from one of the great illustrated papers—the more important of the two, which is said to enjoy a vast circulation—rather its proprietors enjoy it. This was a request to furnish a large contribution suited to the festival, but to be done at once, as there was not an hour to be lost. Two large but effective engravings accompanied it, one of which portrayed a lady in ball dress, fastening her glove; the other the outside of "The Grange," its mullioned windows all lit up—picturesque enough as a subject. This is lifting the corner of the curtain a little discreetly or the reverse; but the fact is so, that more often the story illustrates the illustration rather than the

illustration the story. In the days of the old "Annals" the elaborate copper-plate engravings were done first and sent to contributors to write up to. This was a pleasing office. Working at white heat, I had soon produced a tale of some length—a genuine thing, based on that best of all foundations, one's own experiences; of course, varied a little for dramatic effect. It was despatched—in both senses, that is, completed and sent in in a short period of time.

Now, this story was called "LOVED and LOST (Geliebt und Verloren); or, the Last Waltz." It turned on what might be suggested by some of those pathetic melancholy airs or tunes we hear at a ball in the small hours. A man had met a young girl some years before at such a ball, and during this waltz had declared his affection. Events, however, had interposed and parted the lovers. Some years pass by and he returns. One night he is accidentally at another ball at the Grange—the building with the lit-up mullions—looking on sadly at the dancing, when this very waltz, played again, brings him back to the old scene. But I quote a short passage.

"Here indeed was the scene; 'Skipper's band' was the orchestra. So it went on the rather monotonous round—now quadrille, now lancers, now waltz and headlong galop, wild Balaclava charges; the more sober dances were gradually becoming extinct, to the annoyance of what might be called the Quakers and Methodists of the ball-room, who, with their discreet measures, were coolly put aside in defiance of all law and agreement. At that time of night, to be 'wading' patiently through steps and slow measures was unendurable; and, accordingly, here were the greedy waltzers and galopers devouring dance after dance; while the

aggrieved quadrillers, partners on arm, looked on, rueful and indignant. And now I see Skipper bending down in earnest talk with a sort of deputation, who had waited on him, and now came back with alacrity and rejoicing, ready for fresh exertion.

"Hark! What was it that kindled for me a sudden interest in the proceedings? that made the nerves thrill and the pulse quicken? Where had I heard it? It seemed a strain lent from Paradise! How it rose, and fell, and swelled, and died away; growing tender, pleading, and pathetic; now turning into a fierce clash and whirl, as though impelled by despair and driven by furies; then becoming soothed into piteous entreaty, and winding out in a dying fall. It was, in short, one of those divine waltzes, as they may be called. Where, when, had I heard it? I knew it. There are a few of these that seem part of your life, like a poem. It may have happened that one of those tender, complaining measures has been the accompaniment to some important act. It is then no longer mere vulgar music. Some, such as the newer German waltzes, touch strange mysterious themes, reaching beyond this earth. The time of night or morning, when it winds out, the lights whirling round in rings, the bewildering motion, the floating sylphs, the nebulous tulle, the flowers, the jewels, all join to make up the scene of wild festivity, and it would be enough, one might think. But the artful enchanter then suddenly dissolves into a sad and pathetic strain, for, merry as the dance is, a merry tune would not be in keeping; alternated with the crash of cymbals are desperate protests, as it were, appeal for mercy or reckless defiance, to be succeeded even by grotesque and reckless antic, all, however, to revert to

the pleading of the original strains, led by the sad and winding horn! Such was the 'last waltz' of this night, which thrilled me, yet seemed to thrill Skipper himself far more, who led, as some one near me said, now 'like a demon,' and now like a suppliant begging for mercy. What was it? Where had I heard it? It was charged brimful of agitating memories. Some dancer near me said flippantly, 'Oh, that's the "Loved and Lost"—pretty thing, isn't it?' And, looking down on the card, I read:

"WALZER, "Geliebt und Verloren (Loved and Lost)." *Müller.*

"Again, where had I heard it? For it was music that seemed to belong to other spheres far away, and to time quite distant. There it was again, returning to the original sad song—a complaining horn, full of grief and pathos, which invited such dancers as were standing or sitting down to turn hurriedly, seize their partners, and once more rush into the revolving crowd! It was slow, and yet seemed fast as the many twinkling feet of the dancers. Skipper, mournfully sympathetic, beat time in a dreamy way, as though he were himself travelling back into the past, searching up some tender memories. Then turns briskly, and calls vehemently on his men, dashing into a frantic strophe, with crashing of cymbals and grasshopper tripping of violins; dancers growing frantic with their exertions, and all hurrying round like bacchantes; the strain presently relaxing and flagging a little, as though growing tired—to halt and jerk—then, after a pause, the sad horn winds out the original lament in the old pathetic fashion. For how long would it go on? Skipper knew well its charm, and was ungrudging in his allowance—would probably go over and over it again, so long

as there were feet able to twirl. I know I could have listened till past the dawn.

"Airy, cloudy thoughts and recollections came with the music; it floats to him with a 'dying fall,' it rises again as the brass crashes out, and then, suddenly, flits by him the figure of his old love!"

That night all is made straight and the past forgotten. As much depended on the waltz, a sort of vivid description of the music and its alternations was thus attempted. "Word-painting" is the phrase. We hear the soft inviting sad song with which it began, the strange fluttering trippings into which it strayed—aside as it were from its original purpose—the relaxing, the sudden delirious burst which sent every one whirling round in headlong speed, and the last return to the sad song of the opening.

The story was duly printed, and went forth with a highly coloured portrait of a child, hung up in every shop window. I received a very handsome sum for my services, and was content.

Now begins the story of the waltz. With that curious literalness which characterizes our public or publics—for there are many—and the paper having so large a circulation, there were found persons to assume that there *must* be some waltz of the kind existing, and which had been performed, if not at the ball in question, at least somewhere else! Orders were accordingly sent to various music-sellers for copies, which, as was natural, could not be supplied. A sagacious vendor thus applied to, wrote to the author in question, asking for a copy. It could be published, he said; and suggesting that if only performed in the author's brain hitherto, it could be brought into more tangible and profitable shape for all concerned.

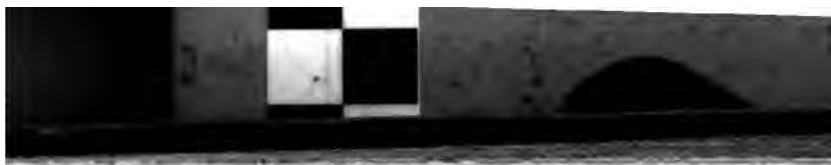
On this hint I went to work, and having a fair, perhaps unscientific, musical taste—having before now written “little things of my own,” yea, and sung them too—I soon put together a string of waltzes. A near relative, also with a taste, had devised a tune which was popular in the family, and this I fashioned into an introduction. It was sent off; a clever professional artist took it in hand, shaped and trimmed and re-arranged, added something of his own, and to my astonishment declared that the introduction—a sad slow measure—was the very thing to be shaped for the rapid step of a waltz. This was somewhat of a surprise, and it was believed that, in consequence, the whole would make certain shipwreck.

In due course the waltz made its appearance. The publisher was an enterprising person and knew how to advertise. Everywhere appeared “Loved and Lost.” I think something was quoted from the newspaper in question. It began to be asked for—to sell. The next step was to have it arranged for any stringed orchestra. Next for the military bands, in what is known as “Boosey’s Journal.” Next it was arranged as a duet, *a quatre mains*. Next, in easy fashion for the juveniles. Next, our publisher came mysteriously to ask would I, “being a literary man, and, of course, a poet,” write words for a “vocal arrangement”? I agreed to do so, and supplied the lines :—

“LOVED AND LOST

(‘GELIEBT UND VERLOREN’).

“Now the city sleepeth,
The night is calm and sweet,
The dying embers rustle—
There’s silence in the street.
Oh, my heart feels lonely
As all the shadows fall;



The spirits softly whisper,
I hear their voices call :
Loved and Lost ! they sigh,
For grief shall never die.
Through weary, weary Time,
Sounds the dismal chime,
Loved and Lost !

“Now sinks the failing lamp—
Through the lagging night,
I hear the tender accents—
I see a figure bright.
Return, ye golden hours—
Sweet vision, linger ! stay !
The spirits softly whisper,
And all dissolves away—
Loved and Lost ! they sigh,
For grief shall never die.
All through the weary time
Hark to the dismal chime,
Loved and Lost !

“So pass the heavy hours,
I chide the long delay,
The night so chill and dark—
I wait the lingering day.
At last, the blissful summons,
What notes my heart enthrall !
I'm coming, I am ready !—
I hear their voices call—
Loved, not Lost ! they cry,
For love shall never die.
And so, through endless time,
Shall swell the joyful chime,
Loved, not Lost !”

Presently the song was being sung at the Aquarium, Brighton. In short, the arrangements in every shape and form now fill a very respectable volume. But what strain was more refreshing than the first grind on the organ, coming round the street corner ; or, later, its regular performance by the German bands, and by the grand orchestra at the Covent Garden Concerts. Yet all this could be referred to the story itself, which was like the whirl of a waltz, dreamy and romantic

and sad. When we came to reckon up the results, some sixty or seventy thousand copies had been disposed of. And some time later, on the copy-right changing hands, it was disposed of for a sum of two hundred pounds.

Such is the highly satisfactory story of a waltz.

I may add one of the most amusing, original literary incidents of this generation, which was the foundation of that great enterprise, "England in the Nineteenth Century." An enterprising gentleman, well known from his giving "bold advertisement" of many things, some years ago conceived the idea of a purely literary venture—a vast cyclopædia which should portray England in all its aspects. For this purpose all the "eminent" literary ones of the day—which, of course, included many that had no claim at all to the title—were called on to supply descriptions; and, under the direction of the vivacious GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA, England was to be shown as it had never before been shown—its fashionable, theatrical, "seamy," and other sides. To open the venture with all *éclat*, the hospitable speculator invited all his future contributors to the appropriate hostelry of the Albion, to a magnificent banquet, at which, I suppose, some hundred and fifty persons must have "sat down" to table. It was a curious miscellany of guests; for our hospitable host had gathered, not merely *littérateurs*, musicians, and artists, but many who were connected with his own profession, and who would be eager to push "England" by every legitimate means. Our chairman, who has a special happy vein for after-dinner speaking, opened the business in one of his best efforts, expounding the plan, complimenting our host on his enterprise, and announcing, with much humour, that the

venture would be started on a particular day from the offices of Messrs. Tinsley, in Catherine Street, Strand—"God *willing*," he added devoutly. Other speeches followed, everybody lavishly showering praise on the "enterprising" host; though, looking round at the vast number of *littérateurs* engaged, it seemed a puzzle how room was to be found for all in the ranks. It was a pleasant evening, and withal a merry one. There were French speeches and French songs, though news came in during the night that "poor Hodder" had been overset—an accident of which he died. Notwithstanding this flourishing, "England," while expecting every man to do his duty, unaccountably failed in hers. Articles were written—the first number even printed—when it was announced abruptly that the plan was given up. Everybody was paid handsomely. I confess I admired this proof of the good sense, and even wisdom, of our host. The truth was, on reflection, he had seen that the scheme could only end in loss.

From the Diary, too, I take a record of one of the drollest scenes conceivable. The officers of the garrison at a provincial town had hired the theatre for a performance. On the night it was crowded, and between the acts a lady that taught elocution had kindly consented to come forward to recite Edgar Allan Poe's poem of "The Bells." It will be remembered that the piece describes various descriptions of bells with singular power, the first strophe being devoted to the "wedding bells." We listened with pleasure to the melodious lines—

"Hear the music of the bells,
Wedding bells,
How they," etc.

She imparted a sort of tender nuptial tone, with a

kind of conjugal grace, to the lines, and when the burden came she chimed it out :

“Bells, bells, bells,
Bells, bells, bells, bells,”

beginning to peal them as if she were a bell-ringer herself! Her voice fell into a sing-song; her hand was raised to her ear as if to catch the distant chiming. Some few behind tittered, but we were all more astonished than amused. The effect was odd. But at the next verse, which dealt with funeral bells, the lady became mortuary and dead-cart-like. She turned suddenly into a ghoul, and when it came to the burden we seemed to hear the chimes of an adjoining tower :

“To the pealing of the bells,
Bee-yells, beeyulls,
Boolls, boolls, bulls, bulls,
Boles—BOWLES—BOWLES !”

Between each “toll” of “be-ells!” there was a long pause. She boomed out the words, as it were, while her hands, holding an imaginary rope, slowly and sadly drew it down at every peal. As this extraordinary mimetic representation set in, some began to look wonderingly at each other, then to smile, and at last a wave of tittering began to spread away even to the last benches. People roared and roared again. For myself, I can say I never witnessed anything more diverting, the exquisite sense being increased, since as the peals of laughter rose, the fair elocutionist was to be seen still slowly and gently pulling the rope, the booming being unheard, until, at last, her grasp seemed to relax and an air of deep reproach and wounded sensibility, mixed with wonder, spread over her face. The better bred felt the reproach

and hushed down the ill-timed merriment. We composed ourselves for the concluding verses, those on the alarm of fire, when the fire bells ring out and rouse the population. She began calmly—

“Hear the music of the bells,
Fiery bells !”

But as the conflagration spread, her agitation increased, the peals of the bell followed short and fast, and when she got to the refrain—

“Bells, bells, bells !”

her arms worked at the rope, up and down, with frantic energy, and with every stroke came the word “bells ;” but contending with this were the hearty roars of laughter that rose again and again, some falling back in almost hysterical agonies ; amid which the poor lady, wounded to the very heart, retired.

CHAPTER IX.

THE TAVERN.

THE *littérateur*, if he be not a mere workman, has a number of plain entertainments which form the contemplative man's recreation, as old Isaac has it. He may live by himself, yet he is not solitary. He can people his room. His day goes by swiftly ; at evening there is the dinner at the Club, or he can afford himself the chop at the old tavern, the Cock, on the sanded floor near to the hob. Thence home to the cheerful fire, the curtains drawn close, the friendly comforting pipe, and from, say, nine till midnight the pleasant book

of Memoirs or novel. For as a certain versifier chants—

“The student is not lonely—
 His children he can call ;
 His books are his companions,
 His pictures on the wall.
 For him the kindly past unrolls
 Rich tapestries and rare ;
 At night he hears the sad patrols,
 The footsteps on the stair !
 The footsteps on the stair,
 As though a crowd were there !

“The student is not lonely—
 His clock is on the wall ;
 His thoughts are ever company,
 His pipe is all in all.
 What visions in its fumes,
 What dreamings in his chair,
 And whisperings from the tombs,
 The footsteps on the stair !
 The footsteps on the stair,
 As though a crowd were there !”

No student will disdain the ancient charm of tavern life, which, oddly, still endures after a fashion. One can relish a visit to these places—not, of course, for companionship, but for the tranquil air and old-fashioned solitude amid numbers. The excellent Boswell says in his journal: “We dined at an excellent inn, where Johnson expatiated on the felicity of England in its taverns and inns, and triumphed over the French for not having, in any perfection, the tavern life. ‘There is no private house,’ said he, ‘in which people can enjoy themselves so well as at a capital tavern. Let there be ever so great plenty of good things, ever so much grandeur, ever so much elegance, ever so much desire that everybody should be easy ; in the nature of things it cannot be : there must always be some degree of care and anxiety. The master of the house is anxious

to entertain his guests ; the guests are anxious to be agreeable to him ; and no man but a very impudent dog indeed can as freely command what is in another man's house as if it was his own. Whereas, at a tavern, there is a general freedom from anxiety. You are sure you are welcome : and the more noise you make, the more trouble you give, the more good things you call for, the welcomer you are. No servants will attend you with the alacrity which waiters do who are incited by the prospect of an immediate reward in proportion as they please. No, sir ; there is nothing which has yet been contrived by man by which so much happiness is produced as by a good tavern or inn.' He then repeated, with great emotion, Shenstone's lines :—

' Whoe'er has travell'd life's dull round,
Where'er his stages may have been,
May sigh to think he still has found
The warmest welcome at an inn.' "

Many and many a pleasant contemplative hour have been spent there, during many a year. To persons who have never entered a tavern in their lives, the COCK in Fleet Street has a certain charm of association, mainly owing to its having been celebrated in verse by the Poet Laureate : though perhaps few are familiar with what he has said or sung upon the subject, and fancy he has contented himself with the oft-quoted lines to the "plump head waiter at the Cock," which gave that personage an immortality as unexpected as perhaps it was undeserved. The lines on "Will Waterproof's" visit give no actual description of the place, but they have an extraordinary charm of pensive retrospect and solitary meditation, and convey an idea of the tone of the old place, and of the fancies it is likely to engender

in some solitary and perhaps depressed guest. A series of pictures and moods is unfolded in this charming poem, with a dreamy rumination and pleasant sadness; visions float upwards in the curling fumes of the smoker's "long clay." But only a great poet could extract a refined quintessence from the mixed vapours of chops and steaks. It was called, it will be remembered, "Will Waterproof's Lyrical Monologue, made at the Cock," and began—

"O plump head waiter at the Cock,
To which I most resort,
How goes the time? 'Tis five o'clock.
Go fetch a pint of port :
But let it not be such as that
You set before chance comers,
But such whose father-grape grew fat
On Lusitanian summers."

We could wish that Doctor Johnson, who haunted Fleet Street, had been a frequenter of the Cock, an excellent subsisting specimen of the old taverns. Temple Bar passed away to utter indifference, and even some derision; the old monument was abused, jeered at; why did it cumber the ground? Yet it was certainly an attraction. That rumbling under the old gateway, as you entered Fleet Street, had a certain piquancy. Though it was giving way, it was but an idle pretext to say that nothing could be done to repair it. As you passed beneath, you felt you came within the precincts—you entered the City. There was the Temple to the right; the old gilt cock, not without a certain air of strut and spirit, over the little stunted doorway of the tavern on the left. Now all is open and clear—the City has no beginning.

You go through a little squeezed and panelled passage to enter, and at the end of the passage

you pass the little window of the "snuggery," or bar, of a most inviting sort on a winter's night, with something simmering on the hob. There sits one whom we might call "Miss Abbey"—like Dickens's directress of the "Fellowship Porters"—to whom come the waiters, to receive the good hunches of bread, "new or stale," which she, according to old unvarying rule, chinks down, or up, on the mahogany sill of the door. All is duly sawdusted. The ceiling of the long low tavern room is on our heads. The windows are small, like skylights, and give upon the hilly passage or lane outside. There are "boxes" or pews, all round, with green curtains, of mahogany black as ebony. But the coveted places—say, about a sharp Christmas time—are the two that face the good fire, on which sings a huge kettle. The curious old chimney-piece over it is of carved oak, with strange grinning faces, one of which used to delight Dickens, who invited people's attention to it particularly. There is a quaintness, too, in the china trays for the pewter mugs, each decorated with an effigy of a cock. On application, those in office produce to you a well-thumbed copy of Defoe's "History of the Plague," where the allusion is made to the establishment, and also a little circular box, in which is carefully preserved one of the copper tokens of the house—a little lean, battered piece, with the device of a cock, and the inscriptions "The Cock Alehouse" and "C. H. M. ATT. TEMPLE BARR. 1655."

It is a pity to see that there is not the conservative continuity in the line of waiters, which should be found in such a place. They seem to come and go—go rather than come. They used to be all "in key," as it were—had grown stout and old in the service. Latterly, time, in its

whirligig changes, has brought round changes almost revolutionary, and we find strange, unsuitable beings in office. One was a dry, wiry man of despotic character, who administered on new modern principles, unsuited to the easy-going manners of the place. He dealt with the customers in a prompt, almost harsh style. He knew and recognized no distinction between old frequenters and new. I fancy he was not popular. I believe his place was in the new "restaurants;" but here, among the "boxes" and pews, and on the sanded floor, he was an anachronism. With the old *habitues* he was a perfect fly in the ointment. When he found himself distasteful, he adopted a strange device to recommend himself—the compounding a curious sauce, which he called "pick-ant," and which he invited guests to try. It did not much avail him, and death has since removed him to pay his own score. The good old "brown stout" is to be had in perfection at the Cock, and port good in its kind.

To stray into this cheerful hostelry of a chill winter's evening, finding snug shelter, with snow or rain outside, recalls one of those scenes in old inn parlours which Dickens was so fond of describing. Here are cosy red curtains; the world shut out; warmth and light. Many of the creations of the great writer will be found here; the Temple clerk, the retired solicitor—dry, quiet men of the Perker class, that have come across from their lonely chambers, and sit solitary, content with themselves, while they mix comforting brew of "hot Scotch" or "Irish." These beings are interesting of their kind. At times there will hardly be a sound in the place, so placid is the old-world temper of the tavern. An old frequenter of the Cock remembers the tankards hung round

in shining rows, each the special property of a customer.

The "all-knowing" Timbs—now, with Peter Cunningham, passed into the domain of the antiquities they both explored so well—was a frequenter of the place.

There are old rites and customs of service here which are maintained according to the tradition. Your good clay pipe is brought to you, and your twist of good and fragrant tobacco. And an anchorite would find it hard to resist the apparatus for mixing the "brew" of "hot drink" or "Scotch," the little pewter "noggin," the curling rind of lemon with the more juicy fragment of the interior, and the tiny glass holding a sufficiency of sugar, with the neat block-tin jug filled from the copper kettle boiling on the hob.

There are two other taverns almost *vis-à-vis*, and each with antique claims. One, the RAINBOW, which boasts a remote pedigree. But though you enter in the favourite Fleet Street style through a narrow passage, the place itself has undergone much restoration. "Dicks'," the other, is down one of the Temple lanes, dark and grimed, and somewhat rudely appointed, as though it wished to rest its claims entirely upon its "chops and steaks," and upon nothing else. "Dicks'" is labelled outside "Ben Jonson's Noted House," and boasts with reason, or without, to have enjoyed the custom of that eminent man. But the art and science of cooking chops is not nearly so highly esteemed as it used to be in the last century, when noblemen and gentlemen frequented taverns, and clubs did not exist, save at taverns.

I confess to loving Fleet Street—interesting in so many ways—almost as much as Dr. Johnson. It is remarkable for the curious little courts

and passages into which you make entry, under small archways. These are Johnson's Court, Bolt Court, Racquet Court, and the like. Indeed, it is evident that the strange little passage which leads into the Cock must have been originally an entrance to one of these courts, on which the tavern gradually encroached. Much the same are found in the Borough, only these lead into great courts and inn yards. But in Fleet Street they are specially interesting. We can fancy the Doctor tramping up to his favourite tavern. Passing into the dark alley known as Wine Office Court, we come to the Old Cheshire Cheese, in a narrow flagged passage, the house or wall on the other side quite close and excluding all light. The Cheese looks, indeed, a sort of dark den, an inferior public-house—its grimed windows like those of a shop which we can look in at from the passage. On entering, there is the little bar facing us, and always the essence of snugness and cosiness; to the right a small room, to the left a bigger one. The Cheshire Cheese offers its dirty walls and sawdusted floor, a few benches put against the wall, and two or three rude tables of the plainest kind against the wall. The grill is heard hissing in some back region, where the chop or small steak is being prepared; and it may be said, *en passant*, that the flavour and treatment of the chop and "small dinner steak" are there—breakfast and luncheon steaks also?—are quite different from those done on the more pretentious grills which have lately sprang up. On the wall is a testimonial portrait of a rather bloated waiter—Todd, I think, by name—quite suggestive of the late Mr. Liston. He is holding up his corkscrew of office to an expectant guest, either in a warning or exultant way, as if he had extracted

the cork in a masterly style. Underneath is a boastful inscription that it was painted in 1812, to be hung up as an heirloom and handed down, having been executed under the reign of Dolamore, who then owned the place. Strange to say, the waiter at the Cheshire Cheese has been sung, like his brother of the Cock, but not by such a bard. There is a certain irreverence; but the parody is a good one. It has its regular *habitués*; and on Saturday or Friday there is a famous "rump-steak pie," which draws a larger attendance; for it is considered that you may search the wide world round without matching that succulent delicacy. Hither it was that Dr. Johnson used to repair. True, neither Boswell, nor Hawkins, nor after them Mr. Croker, take note of the circumstance; but there were many things that escaped Mr. Croker, diligent as he was.

The left-hand room on entering, it seems, and the table on the right on entering that room, having the window at the end, was the table occupied by Johnson and his friends almost uniformly. This table and the room are now as they were when I first saw them, having had the curiosity to visit them recently. They were, and are, too, as Johnson and his friends left them in their time. Johnson's seat was always in the window, and Goldsmith sat on his left hand."

On the other side of Fleet Street we can see the Mitre Tavern, closing up the end of a court—but not the old original Mitre where Johnson sat with Boswell. It was pulled down within living memory, and with it the corner in which the sage used to sit, and which was religiously marked by his bust. Yet even as it stands in its restoration, there is something quaint in the feeling as you enter through a low covered passage from Fleet

Street, and see its cheerful open door at the end. There are other taverns with such approaches in the street. The Old Bell is curiously retired. The passage to the Mitre is as it was in Johnson's day, and his eyes must have been often raised to the old beams that support its roof. Even in its modern shape it retains much that is old-fashioned and rococo. It is like a country tavern in London, with its "ordinary" at noon—and a good one too—and its retirement so close and yet so far from the hum and clatter of Fleet Street.

We have yet another tavern to which we can track him, and which still "stands where it did." We pass from the open *Place* where St. Clement Danes stands—one of the most Dutch-like spots in London, to which idea the quaint and rather elegant tower lends itself. To hear its chimes, not at midnight, but on some frosty evening nigh to Christmas, when the steeple is projected on a cool blue background, while you can see the shadows of the ringers in the bell-tower, is a picturesque feeling. They fling out their janglings more wildly than any peal in London; they are nearer the ground, and the hurly-burly is melodious enough. Those tones the Doctor often heard in Gough Square and Bolt Court, and inside he had his favourite seat, to this day reverently marked by a plate and inscription. Yet St. Clement's is in a precarious condition, and when the Law Courts are completed its fate will be decided.

It is, perhaps, GOUGH SQUARE, to which one of the little passages out of Fleet Street leads, that most faithfully preserves the memory of Johnson. It is rather a court than a square; so small is it that carriages could never have entered, and it is

surrounded with good old brick houses that in their day were of some pretension. A worthy society has fixed a tablet in the wall, recording that "Here lived Samuel Johnson." The houses are of the good sound old brick ; some have carved porticoes, and one is set off by two rather elegant Corinthian pilasters. There is a pleasant flavour of grave old fashion and retirement about the place, and little has, as yet, been touched or pulled down. Johnson's house faces us, and is about the most conspicuous. He had, of course, merely rooms, as it is a rather large mansion, a little shaken and awry, queerly shaped about the upper story, but snug and compact. It is now a "commercial family boarding-house," and the hall is "cosy" to a degree, with its panelled dado running round and up the twisted stairs in short easy lengths of four or five steps, with a landing—which would suit the Doctor's chest. The whole is in harmony. We can see him labouring up the creaking stairs. A few peaceful trades are in occupation of the place—printers, and the like. It is an old-world spot, has an old-world air, and suggests a snug country inn.

But, turning to Essex Street, and not many doors down on the left, at the corner of a little cross-passage, leading to the pretty Temple gate, with its light ironwork, we come on the ESSEX HEAD TAVERN, an old, mean public-house of well-grimed brick. It was here, in his decay, that Johnson set up a kind of inferior club. Boswell is angry with Hawkins for calling it "an alehouse," as if in contempt ; but certainly, while the Cheshire Cheese, the Mitre, and the Cock are taverns, this seems to have been more within the category of an ale- or public-house. It has been so rearranged and altered to suit the intentions and

purposes of the modern "public," that there is no tracing its former shape. In the passage there is a little room known as the "parlour," underneath which accommodation has been found for a cobbler's stall. They should surely have Johnson's "rules" hung up. Probably they never heard of his name, viewing it much as did an officer of the *Morning Advertiser* when notice of a birth was sent from an eminent novelist's family—it was then customary to insert such without charge in the case of eminent *littérateurs*—"Oo is he?" was the reply; "what 'ouse does he keep?"

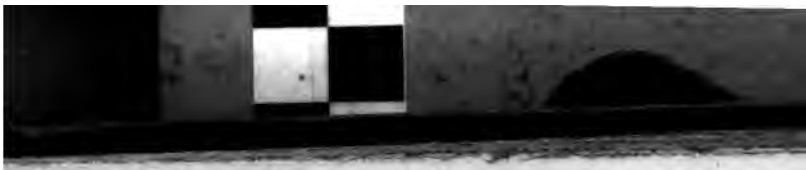
There is a strange sense in living in a large house, many rooms above untenanted, alone, the world abed. Yet, as I have said, this is not solitude. The turning over the old letters and diaries at midnight works as an enchanter's spell, and calls up figures and events shadowy enough. There is a little cabinet within easy reach, filled with such records—with memorials, relics even. These supply company.

"THE LITTLE SHOE!"

"Little Blue Shoe! sad little shoe!
Face that was tender, heart that was true!

"Full many and many a year has flown
Since into the sunlight she came:
And one there is left, and one there is gone—
The tender, bright little Dame.
I see her now—with the dancing eyes,
The sea-shell tint, the glance so sweet.
The fluttering lip and laugh of surprise—
And the bright blue shoes on the little feet.
Little Blue Shoe! gay little shoe!
Face that was tender, heart that was true!

"Full many and many a year has flown
Since the sunny day in June
When she brightened the house that was now her own:
Her laugh as gay as a tune.



For up the stair, and down the stair,
And busily through the street,
Fluttered fast, in matronly care,
The little blue shoes and restless feet.
Little Blue Shoe ! bright little shoe !
Face that was tender, heart that was true !

“Now, many and many a year has flown,
Each bringing a colder chill ;
And one there is left, and one there is gone—
The little feet are still.
All in the days of November gloom
The house I wander through,
And find in a lone, forgotten room,
Lost in a corner, the little Shoe !
Little Blue Shoe ! sad little shoe !
Face that was tender, heart that was true !”

CHAPTER X.

ENTERTAINMENT FOR BREAKFAST.

I HAVE of late often found a diverting pastime in watching for and noting, at the pleasant morning meal, the eccentric mistakes which for the last few years have given the *Leading Journal* a reputation of its own. An explorer of ordinary diligence can scarcely have failed every week to have lit upon some strange oddity or solecism in history, topography, tradition, or English grammar. Murder, or supposed murder, used to be headed “Murder,” the idea being that the inverted commas left the description indistinct and the case unprejudiced ; and where a boy has fired a gun into a crowd, the incident has been introduced ironically as “Accident ?”

It was amusing to find the late Cardinal Cullen described as the “Pope’s *Legatee*” in Ireland, and no less entertaining to hear that the Rev. Mr.

Carlyon—who becomes further on the Rev. Mr. Collier—had been suspended for his “views on the Real *Referee*” (*i.e.* Real Presence). Herr Krupp once cast a singular cannon, weighing so many *kilomètres* (as who should say weighing so many *yards*!). We are told of a wonderful volume of plays, sold at the Didot sale, “revised by Molière *after* his death;” of “a collection of fine *arts*,” sent to Paris for exhibition; of Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone having gone down to *Mentone*, the seat of Lord Rosebery; of a ship ordered to be “removed, repaired, and replaced”—the allusion being to its broken shaft. A funeral is described, which “had a picturesque *though* melancholy effect;” while praise is given to the late Pope worthy of an eminent City man—“*in spite* of many losses he retained *respect*.” Presently we hear of “innocuous,” instead of innocuous, pleasures; of Protection being at its last “grasp;” of something taking place in the year 7847; of “Henri Monmir, the well-known novelist and dramatist, *i.e.* Henri Monnier;” of “the Prince and Princess of Walse;” of “M. Mamel,” the well-known baritone. Allusion is made to the “hatchet with which Captain Cook was killed” as being in some museum; but the navigator, it is well known, was stabbed. An accident is described as having occurred to “a retired gentleman.” The Duke of Guise, not De Guiche, is spoken of as the Duke of Aumale’s son; Sir H. Drummond Wolff is made into a baronet; Lord Dorchester appears as an Earl, and Lord Lurgan as a Knight of the Garter. One Lady Cooper died not long ago, and was bewailed as Lady Cowper. A picture of Delaunay, painted by the composer Gounod, is pronounced an interesting effort; but it turns out that it is Gounod who had sat to Delaunay. To convey that Lord Hartington

put a question in the House, to which he received an answer, the following phrase is used :—"Lord Hartington asked, and *asked successfully*," *i.e.* had succeeded in asking, or in getting an answer, or in getting such an answer as he thought was a success. An agreement for the carriage of the mails was made in *consort* with Mr. Inman. A very droll effect was produced by the appearance of a letter from the Prince of Wales's Secretary. No doubt the foreman had told the compositor, "Here is Mr. Knollys' letter," giving the correct pronunciation; and it was accordingly printed with the signature, "W. KNOWLES." A prisoner is indicted *with* certain felonious acts; and a personage, or site—I forget which—is declared, in an artistic sense, to be capable of "obeliskal treatment."

Equally droll are the allusions to the Caudine Forks, which it is declared used to be solemnly *erected* every session in Lord John Russell's day, in order that the Dissenters might be forced to pass *under* them. These "forks," of course, were nothing but a mountain pass. The writer had, no doubt, some hazy notion of passing under the yoke. Then we have an allusion to that curious "list of Darius' instruments of music in the Book of Daniel;" the instruments being Nebuchadnezzar's, not Darius'. In a more poetical vein the *Leading Journal* talks feelingly of the bells of Shandon sounding "so grand on" Shannon's shore. They were, or are, heard on the river Lee. Speaking of a debate which it said "began at a quarter to four in the afternoon, and ended at a quarter to six next morning," it says, with contempt, "If it be asked what passed in this long interval, the answer must be, twenty-six hours." There is no "must" in the case, for the interval was fourteen hours.

Not long after there was a description of a play called "New Babylon;" and a scene is mentioned in which two vessels appear to come in collision. "A steamer going down before the outraged red-and-green light of the other." A steamer that "collides" may be said to "outrage" the other; but why should the "red-and-green light" be made the centre of this sentiment?

On the death of Count Palikao there was the usual mortuary retrospect, in which was the singular blunder: "It was he who during the fatal days of July and August, 1870, made himself famous by his *bouton de guêtre*. It was he who narrated a story of the Prussian dragoons, and who said 'if Paris knew,' " etc. Now, it was Lebœuf who spoke of "the button on the gaiters;" and it became evident it was merely a slip, and not a very heinous one; but it is characteristic of the writer that, instead of owning the mistake, he should attempt to justify his own exactness. "Owing to the *telegraphic omission of a line*," he wrote, "a remark was attributed to him (Palikao) which was uttered by his predecessor." An allusion to Lebœuf had been dropped out, and the whole should run, "It was he who during the fatal days of 1870, *even after* Marshal Lebœuf had made himself famous by the *bouton de guêtre*, narrated the story of the Prussian dragoons," etc. It will be seen at once that this could never have been the original shape, as the "*even after*" is nonsense. There is no connection whatever between Lebœuf and his *bouton* and Palikao's declaration. Certain Madrid festivities are described in the following jargon:—"From nine o'clock in the evening the hall was crowded from the stalls to the fourth gallery, the front boxes being filled with *all that Madrid contains of noble, elegant, beautiful, and*

young. . . . Here the mingled magnificence exceeded in picturesque and elegant variety everything imaginable." Then one sentence, after describing the ladies' toilettes, ends thus: These, "and a hundred others, whose names Spain repeats with pride and admiration, *looking about them and regarded with curiosity, formed round the Royal Lodge the most beautiful and seductive circle a romantic imagination could devise.*" The word "Lodge" is, of course, meant as a translation of "Loge." On another day it spoke with pitying contempt of the "apocryphal signal which has become as religiously held an article of faith in the English navy as the 'Vive la République' of the sinking Vengeur in the French." This, it seems, alludes to Nelson's signal, "England expects every man to do his duty." Apocryphal! No doubt the writer has some hazy idea of Cambronne's speech and the Duke's "Up, guards!" but the immortal signal is historical, and vouched for by captains of the fleet and others.

The use of metaphors is even more extraordinary. Unlike Lord Castlereagh, who made the "features of a case hinge," the gentleman who chiefly deals in similes in Printing-house Square carries them out with audacious precision. Thus, after likening the European Assurance Office to a shark, the details were elaborated with scientific consistency. "The societies it had successively swallowed down," it seems, "had themselves subjected others to the same process. The British Nation Life Assurance Association, for instance, contained inside it ten other life-offices which it was endeavouring to digest." "A strange and horrible spectacle was presented when it was ripped up. Other fishes, great and small, were disinterred in handfuls from their living tomb, and lay writhing



and mouthing at each other in a fashion even to astound an Equity barrister." "It was impossible to say where they ended and the European Society began. Heads and tails and scales were sticking here and there out of their stepmother's carcass in every direction." At the same time elaborate metaphor is often dangerous; and when a country is likened to a man deprived of his arms and legs it is a mistake to employ a nut as the simile of a body. "It will be evident that when arrangements of this kind are made, Turkey will be reduced at *its extremities*, but will retain a *solid kernel* of rude territory." *

These specimens will show that much entertainment, independently of its news and notes, can be extracted from the columns of the Leading Journal by the observant reader.

CHAPTER XI.

COUNTRY-HOUSE LIFE.

FOR the *real* "working man"—the overtaxed being who slaves all the year round with brain and will and wits, and whose fingers ceaselessly go over the measured distance—the country-house visit is the true Convalescent's Home. But for one with a keen sense of enjoyment, there is nothing more inspiring than when cares have been shuffled off temporarily—say for a week—when the cab waits below, and word is brought up that everything is "on," the last cloak, bag, gun, is "in," and you go

* I do not assume the credit of discovering all these diverting mistakes, many of them having been noted in the journals, *The Pall Mall* and *St. James's Gazette*, under Mr. Greenwood's direction.



gaily down, step in as gaily, and give the word cheerily, "Charing Cross!" or "Great Northern!" You are starting for a country-house. You are going home from school—a rather big schoolboy; but somehow it brings back that notion.

There is no sensation more agreeable than, after a pleasant travel of an hour, to find the train slackening speed as it draws up, say at Staghurst, the Nupton station, on a soft and charming afternoon. Everything is very green and pastoral about Staghurst—the hamlet, smoke curling, and the rest; and I, the only passenger alighting, see Nupton's light open waggonette and pair, and Nupton's coachman waiting in a pastoral dreamy way. I call him Nupton, but every one knows some such hospitable friend. All seems innocence and tranquillity, even to the porter who takes the portmanteau, lying abandoned far up on the platform, and puts it with deep respect into the Nupton waggonette.

An establishment of the class of Nupton has great charms, conducted in the palace and great-house style, and yet with a friendly and hospitable and even unceremonious fashion. A fine house or semi-castle, newly built and decorated, five or six riding-horses, three or four carriages, luxurious shooting, fishing, and hunting, two billiard-tables, and a *groom of the chambers*—this is the way they do things at Nupton. It may be that he is outrunning his income (a more rustic class talk of "outrunning the constable"); but that does not concern us his guests, who at such houses are the most hollow of worldlings; as, indeed, is Nupton himself, and his wife, who merrily "order" guests to fill their house at the correct festival time, as they order tradesmen to send them down buhl cabinets and mirrors. But while it lasts, it is, and

will be, very delightful ; for it is like going to a theatre, or passing into some false existence for a term : everything being conceived in this spirit and mapped out by Nupton for this short period of magnificence—extra servants, state liveries, and the *great* cook, who wrote the “English Cuisinier,” and who has been chartered for ten days only ; after which the lamps will be put out, and everybody dismissed.

It is very pleasant the driving up through the fine demesne and park spreading out charmingly, and giving a *nobleman-like* air, and gazing on the wood and water and deer and ancestral oaks and elms. The connection of Nupton’s ancestors, by the way, is by no means assured, for it is well known that it was his father’s money— However, this is ungracious.

Again, the look of the house, which has a tranquil populated air—lights twinkling up and down : for it is dressing-time at places like Nupton. A discreet man will always arrive just at dressing-time ; the foolish man will take care to come between two and three. With what result ? What might have been a whet becomes a drug. He is cast upon the hostess ; for he knows no one. Every one is away shooting or riding ; a balance of ladies is left ; and before the end of those weary hours the bloom is off the rye—he is stale and stupid. Compare the discreet man, who comes dashing up just as the dinner-gong is sounding. “Dear me ! afraid I am so late.” “Jest in time, sir,” the solemn groom of the chambers says ; “gong only jest rung.” The discreet man is into his finery in a moment, and comes down into the crowded room—the *new guest* ! There is a gentle curiosity—he is a mild sensation—a novelty. At dinner he is a sort of tonic, for he *has the latest*

town news; and if he be *very* discreet, he will have come furnished with some little report, which *may or may not be true*. Faces look down from the ends of the table to the interesting stranger who is chattering volubly, relating his adventures. Nupton is pleased with his guest, who is thus doing him credit.

Breakfast at the state country-house is always a pleasant starting-point. Every one is fresh. Old Mr. Thompson, our member, over at the side-table cutting up grouse, tells how he has been over at the farm, on a walk. Young Dalton and the son of the house have been out riding. A pensive lady—"young lady" she claims to be called—was in the garden *gathering flowers*, "and saw Mr. Dalton and his friend ride out." *They* did not see her. General clatter and chatter. It is wonderful how people eat at these places. Through the din, Nupton, who himself enjoys nothing except his state, is settling about the dogs. "I have told my head keeper to be in waiting after breakfast—so you can see him, Philips. *I* would recommend the new plantation, which has not had a gun fired into it since last year. However, that's all for yourselves." There is always some selfish campaigner in the party like Philips who has "knocked about" a good deal. "Then you will lend me your breech-loader, Nupton," says Philips coolly. "I can't shoot with the thing they gave me yesterday. I told your fellow he ought not to have such a piece—it's a discredit to the house."

This is a public rebuke to Nupton, whose muskets and gun-room keeper cost him a fortune. But Philips is "a cool hand."

Pleasant after breakfast the council on the terrace or steps, when cigars are lit, and the "fellows" are going back and forward to and

from their rooms, getting ready. Then comes the gun-room and the keeper. There is always one of the type of Philips to take possession of the keeper and make him his own, or rather one whom the keeper accepts as the *can-ning* man, the king of the party. No men have the power of contempt, or sarcasm even, *in their bearing*, to the degree keepers have. They have an undefined manner of respectful depreciation, exerted on certain members of the party, which has always been my admiration and envy. They pierce through the clumsy but elaborate disguises of straps, breech-loaders, pouches, etc., and expose incompetence in all its nakedness. With them an honest and avowed ignorance is the more respectable.

Nothing is more fresh or inspiring than this going forth of a fresh clear morning, with the ground crackling under foot and the air sharp and stimulating. The lines of the branches are edged with little films of frost, and the great fields and the plantations, and the little hills, and Nupton's own house and park, look charming; and we envy Nupton his acres and happiness, not suspecting that Nupton is at that moment in his study shut up with his agent, with a wistful, careworn face, plotting some scheme by which they shall raise money to meet the heavy interest now overdue. We walk on, in our cheerful procession, a dozen strong, with the retainers bringing up the rear, and the keeper's two terriers, themselves wiry and frosty, and with coats that seem made of cocoa-nut fibre, and who enjoy the prospect of the day's sport as much as we do.

We go out through many swinging gates, through the farm at the back, leap across frozen brooks, and at last draw near to the mysterious

plantation, which has been held sacred since last year. Nupton will tell us at dinner what the fattening of that cover cost him; how something "got among the birds," and how he thought it better to get a whole lot from Lord Sowberrys' keeper. He had to pay men at night to watch. "Altogether, I suppose," says Nupton at dinner, who has a habit of swinging his censer in his own face, "every bird you shot to-day has cost me about a sovereign apiece."

At this little gate of the plantation we halt mysteriously, like a storming party, which indeed we are, and scarcely whisper, while our chief posts us. Two or three go round to the right and left while we wait at the gate. Then the signal is given, and we all enter together in a long line. The unhappy birds, hitherto nursed in the lap of luxury, and actually feeding on some of the courses that Nupton has provided for them—at lunch it may be, or at a late breakfast—little dream of the murderers who are stealing on them. Already a flutter and flapping, with a kind of screech—a fatal "bang" far away to the right, and Philips has drawn first blood, and is reloading. We wait for him, and then move on; henceforward it is all flap, whirr, start, and bang. At every pace some fine heavy creature rises slowly; nay, we can see him walking, strutting among the bushes, alarmed and suspicious, yet afraid to rise. It does indeed seem murderous, when the rich black creature comes heavily down, and plunges and flaps on the ground, while the fine glittering black eye rolls red, burning reproach at its slayer. It is marvellous what risks, as we move forward in skirmishing order, are invisible to each other. There are some fledglings among us—human I mean—whose every motion with their firearms

appals. The sound of the shot rattling, too, near among the trees and branches a little in front speaks of an escape rather too imminent; but instead of gratitude and thankfulness, there is angry and heated expostulation. One of these raw hands kills some wretched bird scarcely a perch from him, and the unholy slayer becomes jubilant and excited, blazing away to this side and that, regardless of human life. An hour past noon; the sun shines out, and we halt at some farmhouse for lunch. The sandwiches come out, the flask. At most great houses—at Nupton's of course—this is all done *en grande*, and there are special menials sent on with heavy baskets containing knives and forks, table-linen, bottles, and all the *appareil* of a formal lunch. Far better, and more unconstrained, the little paper packet of sandwiches and the flask, aided by the hospitality of the farmhouse, home-brewed beer and the like—service to be more than handsomely requited by the offering of a hare,—a luxury to be enjoyed on the coming Sunday without guilty terror. Once—but this was not at Nupton—a scene not a little dramatic took place on the occasion of one of these noontide refectations.

We return home to dress for dinner. Hark to the gong or bell. Nupton generously allows a little "law" to people of rank. We troop down "the grand stair;" the numerous "bachelors," treated in an ostentatiously pariah fashion, which does not in the least take off the sense of affront, descending *their* meaner staircase, which leads up to regions originally, I firmly believe, intended for menials. We assemble gradually: our host enters last, and, with an anxious air, portions out his males and females. This causes him some quarter of an hour's thought in his study. "It's so hard

to get variety," he says. "And the women get out of temper, you know, if you don't give 'em the right men. I only wonder how people can behave so to people under whose very roof they are, and who are slaving themselves to feast them." Nupton always has his servants drawn up in his hall—to create an air; pressing in coachmen, ostlers, etc., to make a show. Instead of crossing the hall, too, some of these creatures wave us on through a room which has unfortunately two doors; and thus we are obliged "to stream" through a suite of rooms, which is grander and more in the ducal style.

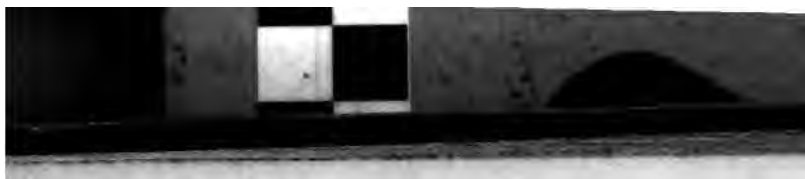
These banquets are welcome; there is always plenty of light and flowers, and the table makes a handsome show. Everybody looks fresh and healthy, and better for their day's exercise; there is a great chatter, and rather boyish spirits. Nupton's own face, looking neither fresh nor healthy, is the only drawback. He is always trying to peer round the epergne, wistfully straining to get a view of some one down at the end. No one ever knows what he wants or wishes to see; but he is thus busy all during the banquet. When the ladies are gone, the gentlemen do not talk very much to Nupton; and, I am sorry to see, fall into that rather painful habit of talking to each other, apparently unconscious of their host—something of which is always owing to the host himself, and some little weakness in his character. But it *is* certainly painful to see a host struggling, beating up hard against the sense of being a cipher, with a natural determination to force himself into notice—a proceeding, from the necessarily obtrusive manner of it, resented as an impertinence.

Of a mild winter's day, about Christmas time, when the darkness is drawing on, towards five

o'clock, there seems something melancholy in the look of the spreading demesne ; the great trees, with their drooping branches spreading wide ; the rolling sward, the stillness, and the air of tranquil solitude. Far off in the distance twinkle lights in the shadowy castle. To a person walking without encountering a soul, all this offers a curious contrast. Perhaps, too, the sense of having to return to the busy "hum of men," from what seems so peaceful and happy. I am never weary of this pleasing sense, and that walk or wandering in the darkening twilight.

In the ceremonial on the morning of the departure, having been up betimes, to catch the early train, there is something specially dismal. Farewell has been taken on the night before, and there is here now the solitary breakfast and the carriage waiting. Sweeping down the great avenue the grass, and the great trees, and the bit of water crossed by the bridge, all look soft, charming, and inviting in the morning sun.

A country house, on a great scale, filled, say at Christmas, with a band of pleasant people, sometimes supplies the memory with pictures and dreams, not "laid in fading colours." With such, many of us will have associations truly delightful, when we have found, almost by accident, what has influenced our whole life. Sometimes the festivities, the plays, theatricals, the rural element at Christmas, the bright lights, the ball, the one charming face long remembered, fall into glittering scenes ; while, with the morning of departure for the railway station, lives a dull recollection, as though the lights had been put out, and we were going back to school. How many romances have dated from some such gathering !



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CHAPTER XII.

ART IN THE STREETS.

THERE is an often quoted story in the "Evenings at Home," entitled "Eyes and No Eyes," which has been perhaps more profitable to the thoughtful than all the official lectures in the world. The principle involved is that there is about us in our sphere a vast amount of what is entertaining and worthy of observation, which, through carelessness or ignorance, is overlooked. The little apologue was applied to objects in the country; but the lover of art and its principles can find much that will suggest reflection and study as he hurries along London streets. I confess the entertainment is inexhaustible and varied. You can criticize every new and old building, and gradually educate yourself; note prospects that are effective; find out faults and beauties, pretty vistas, and the rest. The City is an endless source of delight, and can be explored like a foreign town; there are such quaint old houses and bits of antiquity, while even the modern blocks have an almost Venetian stateliness. There are favourite streets and corners which never tire, and have almost a kind of romance. A strange sensation is produced by going into the City of a Sunday, say towards Christmas time, when it seems peculiarly solitary. There is one street—Thames Street—busy enough of week days, blocked with wains, and crowded with trains of men carrying boxes of oranges on their heads up the steep alleys that descend into it. A highly picturesque old street, with quays and warehouses, and the old churches,

and the bridge which crosses it. But enter it of a winter's Sunday, about five o'clock, the effect is almost solemn from the preternatural stillness. A street of the dead! Not a sound is heard, for the depth of the interposing blocks of houses shuts off all sound. Not a soul is met. On you walk, listening to your own footsteps. The lamps are lit, and the effect is exactly as though it were the middle of the night and every one was sleeping, and you a solitary traveller, just landed and walking up from the Docks. A more curious deception could not be imagined. Presently you emerge at the end, and hear the clatter of cabs and omnibuses, the sound of voices—and it is day again.

If I walk down Pall Mall, I can find entertainment by some such criticism as this on the club-houses and other buildings. These, I say to myself, are most successful, because their exterior is honestly expressive. The architect knows he must find two vast chambers, each well lit, and looking upon the street; each as lofty as possible, being intended for the reception of a large number of persons. He is therefore perforce obliged to throw his building into the shape of two great tiers, which are so marked and *exigeant* that they make their presence felt outside. Thus it is that we always can know that such a building is a club. The Carlton is singularly meretricious in its tone and decoration; nothing can be more inartistic than the contrast of its yellow colour with the bricky hue of the Aberdeen granite pillars. In these, too, an artistic law is violated, the granite columns being cut in short lengths. It is the strength and point of a column that it should be in one piece, and the result here is a rickety, insecure air. Every year

the lines of joining grow blacker. The Reform Club is an admirable building, and will bear study, though it has the defect of being a copy. The air of solidity, of harmony, and completeness is most striking. This will be found to arise from the perfect proportion observed in the relation of the openings for windows to the surface in which those openings are made. This is a matter rarely thought of either in houses or churches, yet it is at the bottom of many failures. A window is for the purpose of admitting light, but it should not be converted into a vast door, as it so often is, stretching from the top to the bottom of the room. Windows naturally weaken the façade unless they are strictly after the fashion of what might be popularly called "a hole in the wall," and should not amount to leaving the front of the house almost an open space, divided only by strips of masonry or brickwork. The fashion of running windows down to the floor gives an air of insecurity, for there should be something to lean the elbows on as we look out. When they do go to the floor the place of the parapet is supplied by the Venetian balcony of stone. The iron make-shift balconies, so common with us, do not go beyond ornament, as they are too frail and open to walk on, and too uncomfortable to lean on. In the Reform Club the proportions are beautiful, the wall in which the windows are pierced being the main object and still a wall—not as in modern houses, where the amount of window space equals the amount of wall space. We are now at Charing Cross. What an improvement to the Square itself if the parapet running along the street in front of the Gallery were removed, and a flight of steps led down straight into the Square!

These criticisms are not very deep, but they

are suggestive, and the habit of making such might lead to something more profound.

It is often, and indeed periodically, announced that some old "bit," whose existence was unnoticed or unknown, is to "come down." These executions of late years are recurring with unseemly rapidity. Some of the survivals even now are a surprise—such as three or four old inns in the Borough, with the galleries running round. It is something to have seen the Tabard; but the most picturesque was the Warwick Arms, at Paternoster Row, destroyed half a dozen years ago. I shall never forget the welcome delight and surprise of a special visit to Leadenhall Street, to see a doomed mansion to which worthy antiquaries had called attention in the papers. It was an opulent merchant's house, some two centuries old, and was truly instructive, as calling up a picture of the social life of the day. You entered from the street under a sort of arch, and found yourself in a courtyard; the merchant's offices and warehouse being in the street, his dwelling-house towards the back of the court. It was a lesson in architecture to note the air of spaciousness as you ascended the oaken stair and found yourself in the nobly proportioned room, painted all round in fresco, the colours grimed and faded. The week following, the workmen began to level it.

There is one mode of education in art open to the sojourner in London, which is of the most agreeable, pleasant, and easy kind; and that is a regular attendance at "Christie's." During the season, a constant succession of great sales is announced, the collection of personages who may have devoted a life, or it may be a fortune, to their pursuit. Each, therefore, is an

exhibition of the best and most costly kind. There you can see for yourself the choice bits of Sèvres and Old Bow; can compare and note—pity perhaps—and wonder how people can devote their lives and purses to such things. So with the great collections of pictures sold during the last ten years, when the dowagers of fashion and their daughters poured in in crowds, as to some flower show or fancy fair. It was really an opportunity for seeing some of those more famous pictures often alluded to in books, but kept down in the country. Some of the crazes of this time will be remembered; and it was a sight to see some poor dupe, with an anxious face, contending with a dealer, before the packed room, to secure a conspicuous bit, say, of Bristol, and which, with a fluttering triumph, he was allowed to do, while “a round of applause” from the crowd rewarded him. He probably has the bit of Bristol now, or has parted with it for a song. The mania for that ware has completely passed away.

CHAPTER XIII.

DAY-DREAMS—HOLIDAY PORTS.

IT is always valuable, in this view of “contemplative recreation,” to keep stored up pleasant scenes and pictures. As the distance lengthens, they grow brighter and more interesting. They are often of the most trifling kind. It is the associations that give the charm. One can have whole galleries of these pictures, which are ever welcome and delightful; but there are some

truly painful, and yet of a sad interest. There are scenes and tours, nights and days, which have a sort of fascination. There are old school-days, midnight journeys. To take a few specimens out of a hundred, Dover and Calais, and indeed ports generally, have always this mysterious charm attached. Places of this kind, seen under hurried circumstances—new, unknown—in the pauses of a hurried journey, gain a theatrical romantic air. They seem called into being specially for us and our travels; the flaring lights, the screaming trains, the up-all-night hotels, the stormy waters, the packets moaning at their berths—these are made specially for our brief transit. Yet, as we know, this is nothing but part of a prosaic daily routine, and such places have a regular life of their own, apart from the functions. This is but a hint, which many can expand for themselves.

Connected with this view, how many little cheap pleasures are there which, without trouble, fuss, or expense, supply infinitely more enjoyment than the elaborate, official, and costly and troublesome. Say that, as I live close to Victoria Station, on one Saturday I shall go down and see a few hours' change of life and scene, without preparation or trouble—go for a night to Calais. The journey down this line, in these holiday times, has a strange flavour and interest. The beautiful country; the hop-gardens, where the workers look up lazily as the train flies by old towns like Canterbury; the glimpse of the Cathedral; the opulent-looking people standing at the rural stations and waiting to get in—all this is interesting and often recalled afterwards.

Add a summer's day; a journey down at noon; and the fresh inspiring air from the vast expanse of blue spreading round, as one toiled up

to the castle ; while below were seen the ships and steamers lying placidly and lazily like insects.

In all the little obscure landing-places and sally-ports called packet-stations, there is always a sort of attraction and even romance. Mean and meagre as are their surroundings, there is a dignity and grandeur about them ; for they are at the edge of the vast and indistinct highway which leads off into the far distance, or more often into the dark and dangerous night. I always feel this in the case of the tiny fence, the little wall that stretches awkwardly into the sea, the old-fashioned town nestling behind, and which for so many years has maintained a gallant struggle with the boisterous enemy outside. Such little shelters, too, have a storm-beaten, buffeted air, a weary air of vigilance.

There is something very interesting in the approach to an unfamiliar port, something that awes as well as interests. The little pier that runs out so irregularly, strengthened with all kinds of makeshifts ; the squat lighthouse at the end, whitewashed or of some copper-coloured stone ; the strange vessels lying alongside ; the curious-looking houses seen through the cordage ; and the people waiting on the pier—all this never palls. Far more dramatic, however, is the spectacle when, towards midnight, the lighthouse, a speck in the distance, grows fuller and brighter, draws nearer and nearer, as do the twinkling lights of the little town behind, until at last we come up close. And as we go tumbling and foaming by, it blazes out upon us with a huge and dazzling brilliance like a vast policeman's bull's-eye turned upon us suddenly. Then black shadowy figures are seen moving on the pier—their shouts seem friendly ; and if the night has

been stormy, a preternatural smoothness and blissful gliding gives comfort to some wretched beings who have been agonizing below.

Of all places in the kingdom for exciting these emotions, perhaps Dover is the most potent. There the old town crouches and nestles under the huge chalk hill like one of the ancient watchmen of a stormy night. It has a weather-beaten air, with suggestions of smuggling; little low houses; while the narrow streets look as though they had been pathways developed. It is curious too that for centuries it has been the old place of landing and departing. What countless throngs of exiles, travellers, kings, queens, have come and gone! How many couriers on matters of life and death, or on some political errand, have come rattling down the hill in the chaise-and-four, with an uneasy look at the sea below, and have chartered the small smack or sloop to take them across! What lords and ladies on the grand tour, travelling in their own carriages; and in war-time, what dramatic work of spies ferried across in an open boat pulled by six strong men! What officers with despatches from Lord Wellington, and other generals, all entering or passing out through the quiet, old-fashioned sally-port! Then the half-French flavour, the French money, the stray Frenchmen, commissioners, or what not; the French vessels lying at the pier—the Parade or Terrace, with its green doors, shutters, and bow-windows, offering a pleasant old-fashioned air.

The most unpleasant idea of the place might have been gathered years ago, before the present trim and convenient mail arrangements were in being. The traveller bound for Ostend at the close of the autumn comes down by the train, and after a chilly journey, as the tickets are being

taken outside the town, he hears the cavernous roarings of the dark monster waiting beyond. As he, with his fellows, turns out into the street, he sees the lights twinkling in the little amphitheatre below, and is assailed with short but keen gusts that sweep up from the sea; robbed, however, of half their vigour by the interposing shelter of the cliffs. And then began that cheerless procession to the water's edge of dark-robed figures, their heads bent down, their luggage attending, and all, it may be sworn, with sinking hearts. Lights flash out everywhere: from the open doors of the minor inns, which are expecting arrivals from the sea; from the lighthouse close by; from the old Ship Inn, which had an inexpressibly snug and substantial air, and seemed to lay its very front to the beach, contemptuous of winds and waves. Then came the mournful piping of the steam, the cheerless pier, the lanterns with their sickly glare, held by tarpaulined men, the slippery gangway, and the mean little craft with the white funnels, and that looked about as dirty as a collier. Once clear of the little pier, inside of which there is a deceptive smoothness, comes the first ferocious lurch, like an ill-tempered horse launching out his hind legs; the sudden swish, as the first sea swoops aboard; and the five or six hours' agony sets in.

Nowadays the preparations are a good deal *adoucis*. There is something stately in the progress of the mails and mail passengers. There is the fine Admiralty Pier, the rails running down to the sea, and ever thronged with sight seers.

Dover always has seemed to me to be the door or lodge-gate through which people enter Old England. The name itself works as a charm to call up the flurry of embarking, the headlong express,

and that awful monster, the tumbling and rolling sea at its feet, waiting for its morning and nightly victims. To quiet people at a distance, sojourners in the country or in cathedral towns, a journey abroad is a great, not to say solemn act. The preparations are anxiously made. In such minds Dover fills out with awful and majestic proportions. To the foreigner arriving, there is something impressive and imposing in the lofty amphitheatre, crested by the old castle, the curved strand, the rows of terraces, and the air of solidity, which distinguishes it from places it so resembles on the Mediterranean. To the flying traveller it has an interesting, if not poetical air, chiefly owing to that sense of being up all night; that bleary-eyed, strained look; lamps ever burning; the mysterious and generally angry sea tumbling against the Admiralty Pier; while the shrieking express rumbles down through the streets, or emerges from the Shakespeare Cliff, to consign its burden to the sea, or returns with a more welcome freight, bearing the much-relieved passengers into the heart of the land. Then there is the great Lord Warden Hotel, ever wakeful and on the watch, reared at the very edge, looking out solemnly towards France—a great weather-beaten fortress, whose walls are charged with blessings and signals of welcome relief. Many have been the exhausted beings that have tottered up to its blessed portal, all spent and dripping, their aching muscles so frayed and torn with the labours of the sea, that but a little more and death, as they fancied, must have come: singers, actresses, ladies of quality, princesses, queens, all reduced to the common thread-paper level, led in by friendly menials well accustomed to the duty. The delicious repose of the sitting-room, or the welcome elysium of bed,

though we hear the enemy still growling and tumbling below under the very windows, boisterously lashing the walls to get at us! But in the small hours of the morning, three or four a.m., when up in London the last waltz is being played, how yet more welcome the cheerful and welcome blaze in the bright illuminated hall, and the fresh unblinking attendants! Paradise, surely! But to-day, in this bright sun, it seems a festive snowy-white pile; Italian-like waiters gazing out pensively at the cobalt blue sea.

The town itself irregular and straggling; the ancient streets, carved and scooped out of the hill-side; the green-verandahed terraces that sweep round the shore—nothing can be more dully and shabbily regular than these crescents and rows of a "damp gamboge tint," as Lamb calls it, which, with the verdigris-green of the shutters, gives but a sad combination. But to-day all is gay and bright, and the streets behind, that meander directly from what the French would call "the port," are piquant enough. Snargate Street, straggling all along, has an originality, especially where the breaks and openings reveal steamers, and cordage, and dock-work, in the closest proximity. The shops, too, seem primitive, and have an air of their own. The name, too, is quaint, while overhead barracks, huge gateways, inlets to tunnels, stray cannon beetle alarmingly, ready like dogs to bark and bite. The population, always sauntering carelessly along the centre of the street, seems made up of soldiers, sailors, and garrison belles.

But as we draw near to the piers, there are some little winding alleys and turns, where you could play hide-and-seek; so antique and odd, too, that they suggest something of the cathedral close idea,

and we expect to see a minor canon fluttering round the corner. Close by here, too, the Chatham and Dover has thrust itself in, to the inconvenience of the town, wishing to push into a good place near the water's edge, while it sends out its curved feelers down to the pier. The other, the South Eastern, has forced itself in to the right.

If one wants to be thoroughly depressed, repair slowly down to the end of the parade. Under shelter of the castle we find a little plot of pleasure, known as "The Gardens." The band plays here periodically, and the Dover natives assemble for promenade. On this attenuated little strip, carefully railed in so as to be made select, the garrison young ladies walk up and down with gentlemen of the garrison.

High up towards the hill, there is a rare old church that seems to be built of flints; and going more inland, we come upon a sort of new quarter of villas and suburban residences, which bears the pretty name of *Maison Dieu*. Indeed, an agreeable day might be spent at Dover by an observant person, made up of a number of not very important sights and incidents, but sufficient to interest. The traveller can wander hither and thither, climb the downs, look towards Folkestone, gaze at the ever-interesting chalk cliffs, wander by the shore; but always will find his restless fancies fluttering to the port, to the great and not by any means silent highway that spreads towards France, and to which all things more or less tend. The whole exists for that—town and all seems but a threshold. The lulls of repose are but intervals, and by day and night impartially the solemn rumbling and shrieks and clatter tell that something is arriving from the ocean, or hurrying down to it. But, indeed, the whole day was full of slight,

trivial perhaps, but not unentertaining events. It was what is called good value, and might be contrasted with the other course of rushing down impetuously in the dark, by night express.

The town has its assembly-room or concert hall, ever and everywhere having the same dreary physiognomy. There is always an unhappy showman, magician, concert-giver, or spouter, who arrives possibly with cheerfulness, naturally building on the crowd of strangers and visitors he sees upon the beach. He takes the rooms, and issues his bills: "Merry-Making Moments—Spanker's Wallet of Varieties," with portrait of Spanker opening the wallet with an expression of delight or surprise. Such a being was in possession on the evening of my day at Dover, a reciter, and this was his Grand Competition Night, when a magnificent goblet was competed for. This I had seen in the window of a mart, a blue ribbon reposing across it. If a tumbler of the precious metal—it was scarcely bigger—could be called magnificent, it deserved the title. The poor operator was speaking as I entered, in unmistakable Scotch, the history of Little Breeches, and was giving it with due pathos. The competition began. There were four candidates. This was certainly the most diverting portion of the entertainment, from its genuineness, the eagerness of the competitors, and their ill-disguised jealousy. A doctor-looking man with a beard, who had the air either of reading familiar prayers to his household with good parsonic effect, or of having tried the stage, uttered his lines with a very superior air, as though the issue were not in doubt. But when a shabby man, who looked as if he had once practised tailoring, stepped on the platform, there was an injudicious show of welcome. He was

smug and confident, at once revealed himself as the local poet, and, encouraged by the applause, announced humbly that he would proceed to recite some lines he wrote "on the great storm which committed such 'avoc on our pier." There were local descriptions, and local names, which seemed to touch the true chord ; notably, an allusion to a virtuous magnate then, I believe, gone to his rest :

" For his good deeds, I must
Make it known,
He founded that refuge
Of the Sailors' 'Ome."

When the votes came to be taken, this poet received the cup. His joy and mantling smiles I shall not forget, though the donor gave it to him with unconcealed disgust ; for it showed to what universal suffrage leads. The doctor and the other defeated candidates, who had been asked to retire to a private room during the process of decision, were now obliged to emerge in mortified procession, there being no other mode of egress. The doctor's face was a study. The second part was to follow. But it was now growing late, and time and mail-packets wait for no man.

During the competition night has let down its curtain. The air is fresh and welcome, though it does not, of course, beat on a fevered brow. The Snargate Street houses just interpose screen-like between us and the sea. There was a busy hum and chatter in the streets, which were filled with soldiers and sailors, and clattering sojourners. Now are all the lamps ablaze. The sea is unruffled, and there is hardly a breath stirring ; and the great chalk cliffs gleam out in a ghostly fashion, like mammoth wave-crests. As it draws on to ten o'clock the path to the Admiralty Pier begins to grow dark ; flitting figures hurry down

past the fortress. Like the Lord Warden, now all ablaze and getting ready its hospice for the night, the town shows itself an amphitheatre of dotted lights, while down below white vapours issue walrus-like from the sonorous funnels of the steamer. Now faint screams, far off from inland behind the cliffs, give token that the trains, which have been tearing headlong down from town since half-past eight, are nearing us. More crowds of shadowy figures are trooping down to the sea; while the railway-gates closed, and porters watching with green lamps, show that the travellers are due. It is really impressive to wait at the closed gate of the pier and watch these two outward-bound trains arrive. Suddenly comes a shriek, prolonged and sustained, and the great expresses from Victoria and Ludgate, which met on the way and became one, come thundering down. Compartment after compartment of first-class carriages flits by, each lit up so as to show the crowded passengers, with their rugs and bundles dispersed about them. Illuminated cell after cell flashes on, and it gives an air of grandeur to think that the solitary pier, jutting out into the waves, should all of a sudden be thus honoured with grand company, and flashing lights, and saloon-like splendour. For what a motley rush has for that brief snatch favoured the lonely spot! Ambassadors, it may be, generals for the seat of war, great merchants, singers or actors, princes, dukes, millionaires, orators, writers, "beauties"—all may be ranged side by side or *vis-à-vis* in those cells. That face under the old-fashioned travelling-cap may be that of a prime minister, and that other gentlemanly person a swindling bank director, flying with the spoil in his pocket.

The next instant the long stone causeway is



alive with a vast crowd. The illuminated label points with a fiery glare "To Calais Boat," while lower down a similar one directs "To Ostend Boat." These two vessels are lying far down below, to be descended to by ladders alarmingly steep; their ghastly white chimneys blowing and snorting sonorously, and raking back, as a fiery horse puts back his ears when meaning mischief. Flaring lanterns, laid on the ground, barely reveal the quivering monster below. Sometimes, indeed, a door in the pier-walls is opened, and shows us the Calais boat bobbing on the outside of the pier, eager to bound into the ocean; but this is on tranquil summer nights.

But hark now to yet another distant and prolonged scream—this time from beyond Shakespeare's Cliff, through which the South Eastern is pierced. A flare of light, a scattering of sparks, and the Charing Cross train arrives. More ringing of bells, and we set off. The charm of the dusk and a calm tranquil night is indescribable. The fierce glare of the French lighthouse drawing near; and at midnight, the gliding in between the piers, the twinkling lights of the town, the cordage, and the fishing-boats clustered together and seen against the calm sky—all this, in its small unpretending way, made up a perfect scene. Walking ashore and up the lonely pier—all the rest are to go on through the long night—I see the old fortifications, drawbridges, towers, etc., and that illuminated clock over the railway station, to the left, glaring with its fierce sleepless eye—as well it may, for it has no rest—with trains coming down and setting off. I passed under Hogarth's old gate, into the open place where the old town and its elegant town-hall stood, whence jangled out softly and musically the chimes. How shadowy were the

outlines of the watch-tower close by! Not a soul was to be seen, not a sound heard; all the bustle of arrival was just *outside* the gate. I was *in* the town. Down a little street, off the Place, I sought Dessein's Hotel, and rang out his bell. Next morning was Sunday, and there was the cathedral, with the fishwomen, their gold earrings and frilled caps and red petticoats—another scene or picture. The old museum, lately the genuine Dessein's Hotel, where Sterne and Scott lodged. Here Brummell's house—a quaint, interesting, tiny place. By mid-day I returned, and was home again. Yet those few hours were a pleasant contribution to life.

I have other recollections connected with these ports. I recall another holiday time, also in the fair summer—a night spent in passing from Belfast Lough to Fleetwood, bound for "foreign parts," full of hope and spirit and anticipated enjoyment. The journey was almost yacht-like. It was five o'clock when, coming on deck, I saw the harbour. Never shall I forget that delicious morning, with the sea spread round of a Mediterranean blue, glistening and glittering; the sky the same, the sun already shining with a noon-day heat that was almost oppressive. The water, smooth as glass, glistened like silver; hardly a breath was abroad as we came gliding up to this unfamiliar port, which seemed deserted and unfinished. A few houses crested the hill overhead, some three or four employés waiting, and a modest little train of some three carriages waiting to convey away our slender complement of about a dozen voyagers. There was, however, no snorting engine with steam up, or guard, watch in hand, impatient to be away. The engine was snug in its shed, dozing perhaps: there were some hours to wait before us. We went ashore, some of us, as

to some newly discovered country. It had been a watering-place projected by the lord of the soil or sand, which had turned out unfortunately; a terrace or two, a few little red-brick workmen's streets, all stopped short in the middle, as it were, of a bare field. We wandered about—not a soul was stirring. I could look into the parlour-windows, and raise them too, and see the tea-table of the night before and the "things" undisturbed. Not a soul was to be seen: there was something ghostly about the place. The most forlorn of all, however, was the pretentious crescent, meant originally to comprise an ambitious hotel, which had failed disastrously, and now seemed to be converted into a barrack. Thus exploring, thus wandering on this delicious morning, more than an hour went by, when we turned back to the pier and began to think of breakfast. Exactly opposite was an old-fashioned inn known as the Crown, with a hospitable-looking waiter at the door. The *habitués* to whom the route was familiar passed across at once; the others entered in a more doubtful and experimental fashion. The surprise within was of a most welcome kind: a long table from end to end of a room already lined with hungry passengers. This was the "packet breakfast," with every substantial delicacy that could be conceived.

After many flights between capitals, and the hurried ten minutes "allowed for refreshment" at Chester and other places, that bright Italian morning, the agreeable voyage, and the tranquil explorations—to say nothing of the enjoyed breakfast at the Crown—come back pleasantly on the memory.

CHAPTER XIV.

DAY-DREAMS—SOME OLD SUNDAYS.

THUS much for journeyings by sea and land. But through that gauzy curtain which hangs between us and our childish days, and which gives to them the misty charm that the same material does to *tableaux vivants*, I can look back and make out a few Sundays more distinct than other Sundays, generally dull and sober days.

There has been a voyage of some three or four days and nights in a lumbering steamer of the older build—of the pre-Scott-Russell era—during which, discomfort and physical agonies of all sorts have been my childish portion ; for there has been rough weather, and the ancient craft has been heaving up and down ; and the boyish mind which relished this motion a good deal on deck, as more or less partaking of “fun,” hears the bell for dinner, and rushes down to enjoy the luxuries of that meal, set out at the public cost, all of which may be partaken of unchecked by maternal restraint—maternal restraint at that moment being miserable in the ladies’ cabin with every other lady. The swinging of the soup-tureen was yet more “fun,” but not that sudden sting that seemed to shoot through the boyish frame—that sharp megrim in the head, precursor of ignominious rout, of the wild rush for the door, the temporary relief in the fresh air, and the final striking down and more sustained agonies that went on day and night on the little shelf that was called berth, until a steward was heard betimes saying that “we were coming in,” and that it was Sunday morning! There was a soft gliding motion

in the old craft that told of smooth waters ; there was the pattering of heels and flopping of ropes sounding overhead ; presently a stoppage, then a going on, and at last wearily, and with a head that seemed as if it were a churn, with a dozen dairymaids churning hard and fast—the boy, that is now a man, crawled up the brass-bound stair, and saw that “we were in.”

Sunday morning, indeed—sunny, bright, blue, glittering ; no longer the weary sea all round, with its heart-sickening monotony, but a great port crowded with shipping, threads and shrouds on all sides, gay snowy-white and yellow houses rising all round, busy yellow quays, crowded yellow quays, quays mixed up with a blue sea, blue sea mixed up with quays, and on the quays men all in cheerful cobalt-blue frocks and scarlet nightcaps, and women with coloured petticoats and no bonnets, but in caps, and with a great deal of gold, and rather copper-coloured. It was bewildering, and, with dairymaids still churning hard, I note, with a boy's special curiosity and even interest, *in spite* of the churn, that there is a huge wheel turning on the quay, which is somehow lifting a great block of stone, and, what is more wonderful, it is turned treadmill-fashion by more men in easy blue frocks, crawling on the wheel, which at that moment appeared to me to be a most delightful mechanical operation. At this moment I have the whole of this scene like a picture before me, and recall my placid wonder at this being Sunday morning, and such operations going on, when, in spite of the dashing of the churn, I hear some one say again that this is France, and that this gay Sunday morning scene is Havre. Then we go ashore, and look back at the heavy lumbering monster which has brought us, without pleasure or

regret leave the port behind, and get down a narrow street where there are no pathways. And above this is a house that seems all mirrors, and golden clocks, and white shining doors, and gorgeous crimson-velvet chairs and sofas, on which we lie down and ease the churning head, and get much better in reply to the affectionate question: "How do you feel now, dear?" when breakfast sets in, with a long loaf of mysterious and wonderful bread made into a gymnastic club.

On this Sunday morning in the French town, much restored by the meal, we go forth. We come to a huge yellow cathedral, all yellow aisles and altars, and innumerable long candles, and wicker chairs enough to furnish fifty houses. And all this crowded to the door; and most wonderful of all, here are a corps of soldiers clattering into the aisle, making their guns rattle on the pavement, and, wonder of wonders, their band striking up with rich effect the popular "Sonnambula" air, "Vi ravviso." This was accepted with present delight.

Another Sunday, this time in England in raw winter. It is dawn. Here is the tall tower with the blazing clock-face which seems to hang in the air. The waters look dark and Stygian; the air is stiff and sharp, and with a suspicion of sleet. And presently, wheeling sharply to the right, we make for a dock where there are heavy red piers massive as rocks and gates to a giant's castle, and where there are flaring lamps and shadowy men that seem to drip through the fog. Then we are put ashore, and grope darkly among sheds, and huge casks, and monster carts half loaded or half unloaded; but all dark and not discernible till one is on them. For this is a Sunday morning, and the genii that load and unload are gone and have left their work half done. Drawbridges that

rumble hollowly, chains that clank, patches of Styx again glistening below, and here are the great gates and the open road and the street.

What the hour was by this time, I did not know. It was strictly no concern of mine, as I was going on by one of the many trains that doubtless left every day, this being a great commercial place. But down by the dock gates, or near the dock gates, there were no cabs: which was strange, considering what a great commercial city this was. Howbeit, a strong porter went on before, and led the way past grim streets and tall chocolate-coloured warehouses, and smoking chimneys and great funereal yards that seemed filled with coal, and long viaducts of smutty-looking arches. But all this was quiet. By-and-by we got to the railway—the London and Grand Diagonal. And now for breakfast at a good hotel—ham, eggs, and “devils” generally—a repast that seems always to harmonize with the human system on coming out of a packet. Here was certainly the London and Grand Diagonal, but all its great gates were shut. It had an air of death—very odd for so great a commercial community. What did it mean? The porter down at the dock, who knew the truth, said he was “afeard” that the train had gone. “You know—Sunday,” he said. A railway porter appeared. “Lord bless me! First train gone a quarter before—the mail up, you know. Sunday, you see. No train till ha’past ten to-night. One train o’ Sundays, you see. Mail up.” Here was a blow indeed: to wait till “ha’past ten” at night in *that* place—a great commercial place—of a Sunday, and I panting to get on. But it was Sunday, you know.

I went to the Grecian, but the Grecian was gone, or was become the Royal Alexandra, or

some such name. Then on to another place not so good. Meanwhile the daylight was coming in slowly, but the streets remained empty. Wonderful in so great a commercial place.

The hotel I had selected was not full at this season. The attendance was of the limpest description. Gradually it became broad day, but at the slowest possible pace. Then was revealed the dismal coffee-room, with a discoloured gamboge paper, that looked glistening and sticky, and to which the corpses of many an indiscreet fly adhered. There were old red and decaying hangings drooping down to the ground and charged with dust. The only objects of furniture to speak of, were two framed and glazed placards, and a sauce-bottle with a brick-red label. One of the placards was the Royal Liver Marine Insurance Company, Limited, with a list of directors and an almost piteous setting forth of the advantages that society had to offer. You might sit for so many hours of the day on barrels of gunpowder, it made no difference. You might embark for the tropics, and be a bishop on the Gold Coast. Then their bonus, and most tempting examples. Thus: A. had insured in the year '45 for a hundred pounds, aged 30. This was only '55, and see what that lucky dog A. was getting already, either a bonus—at his option—of two pounds seventeen and sixpence, or, if he elected to deny himself the bonus, one hundred and twenty pounds at his death. The prospect was set before one in so many appetizing ways that it seemed as if an insurer *must* come at last to long for his own death in order to reap such tempting advantages. The other placard was Messrs. Beales and Co., house-furnishing, etc., with pictures of the interior of their "vast warerooms," which seemed to be

blocked up with every variety of bedstead, with a Louis Quatorze sort of foreman bowing and explaining matters to a lady and gentleman making purchases. Messrs. Beales mysteriously offered "special advantages to newly married couples" (what *could* they mean?) and to young housekeepers. There was the red label of the sauce-bottle too, which set forth that the sauce was "prepared from the recipe of a baronet in the country." I am minute about these matters, because they were the only literature in the room, and because through that long long, weary weary day when I was driven back upon the place from sheer monotony, some horrid and unaccountable fascination drew me over to study these placards and sauce-bottle. It was Sunday, and there were no daily papers. I came at last to know the placards by heart.

It dragged on slowly. I went out through the lonely town, went down to the river, where there was a lonely steamer setting off; thought I would go in it, but reflected and came back. I went out again, and came back again. I thought it would never be done. It was a long Sunday, and the longest of Sundays. The strings of people went to church and came back. It began to grow dark, and the bedsteads and the "special advantages for young couples" faded out.

Then I went to the railway station. I found myself there towards nine, with the gas lit and the holiday people coming home. There were more bedsteads, and Messrs. Beales and their young married couples on a gigantic scale, suited to be seen from distant carriages. There was the long platform to walk up and down, and there were the cave-like coach-houses where the coaches were laid up and seemed to be snoozing. This

whiled away an hour or so. It was drawing near to mail time. The mail bags were arriving, and it was amusing to watch what was done with them. The interior of the railway post-office, with its pigeon-holes and lamps, looked like the interior of a steamer's saloon or cabin, and the rueful alacrity of the employés suggested passengers going on board. Being up all night, the tossing on the blue cushions, the breaking of day, the cold shiver as the door was opened, the general "creeping" feel as we would roll into town at six, this prospect was too much for me. I shrank from it, and went back to my room, a very mouldy apartment. As I entered a savoury smell greeted me. The landlord was having a friendly party of his friends; a noble piece of roast beef was being carried up. Alas! I and another were the only guests in the coffee-room. I believe he would have asked us to join this circle, on a hint that it would be acceptable, which it would have been. All that night we heard the pleasant revelry, singing, etc. A man less retiring would have made one of them.

But the Sunday came to a close at last, and I went away betimes on Monday morning, with the sun shining brightly, and in boisterous spirits.

CHAPTER XV.

DAY-DREAMS—OLD CHRISTMAS DAYS.

INDEED, as we grow older, it is no harm to keep a little fresh patch of grass or two green and well watered. As the eyes get strained and inflamed with the hot dusty vistas of a hard life, it becomes

grateful and refreshing to turn back to some such little spot. People smile at any romance clinging to old school-days as a childish delusion ; but my own eyes turn with a pleasure and fondness even to my own school-days at Saxonhurst, where I lived six or seven years as a schoolboy proper, and whither I returned very often afterwards in the capacity of a schoolboy very much grown up. Our school had Elizabethan towers and wings, its old English gardens, Dutch ponds, dark walk of impenetrable yews, picture galleries, and marble-paved oak-panelled dining-hall, where our scutcheon and device of a pale yellow filled in the mullioned windows. At this time it was wisely arranged that no one should go home : but instead, a grand theatrical season was arranged of, say, ten nights ; every one was allowed to receive a "Box," little or great, from his friends, stored with delicacies, and on which he might gorge : inducements so artfully captivating, that hardly a soul was anxious to consult the claims of affection, filial or otherwise, and go home. Finally, at this season, we, the grown-up schoolboys, who have left the place some five or six years—a special few who liked the place—received welcome notice that our company would be desired. Some of us were far away in the North of England, or farther still, in Scotland ; some of us in Ireland : but that made no difference, we liked each other and looked forward to a meeting with that pleasant and picturesque background—lights through the cheerful red curtain—flashing down the oaken floor or the corridor ; the merry and overpowering clatter of two hundred young voices of all ages between eighteen and eight for music. Relish for such things, no doubt, seems childish enough, but I am speaking of myself now as I was then, and

even as I write begin to find stealing back on me some of these very delightful feelings of the grown-up schoolboy.

Then, as a grown-up schoolboy, I could cheer myself with the thought of a second Christmas coming on the morrow, as it were waiting for me, at Saxonhurst. For the next evening I was away with the night, aboard the packet, crowded with men bound for pleasant country homes, and shooting and flirting parties. A long weary tossing night, yet full of pleasant dreams, and in the morning great Liverpool, with its huge river, all twinkling with lights, like pricked cardboard. Time, five o'clock ; scene, docks and dock-bridges ; a few dark figures, and a tall dark tower, with an illuminated dial hung in the air like a light-house lantern. Then up the little Water Street, which led down to wharves, through more docks, where great waggons are at work, early as it is, carting Christmas oranges and raisins. There was a cold sharp air abroad, as we walked through many solitary streets, a man carrying a port-manteau ; but it had a sort of interest and romance, for, you see, I was still a grown-up school-boy, and had a warm corner in my heart. It seemed strange walking up those great lonely streets, the hoarding ablaze with fiery posters proclaiming the competing glories of last night's pantomimes ; the stray policeman ; and here the lamp hanging out over the door of the hotel, old fashioned—the hotel sunk in the profoundest sleep. A resentful night-porter—a stirring of a surviving fire—a sitting there dozing and nodding till the hotel woke up, and the bright day set in.

It was a Sunday, and a Sunday of Christmas came in for reflected glories of the festival. A cheerful and enjoyable breakfast at the window—

the crowds going by to church, gaily and gala-like; then the church itself, with the holly and flowers still fresh, and Christmas music still playing, gives this day a dreamy, delightful tone. Then on the road again, until dusk, when a sort of village comes gliding by, an "Old Curiosity Shop" church, its aisle window, turned towards us like a shoulder, all lit up. Most familiar all this to the grown-up schoolboy; he knew that behind that old window were laid those casket-shaped tombs, with knights lying on them, which he had gazed on with a mysterious wonder. Beside it the old inn, the Somebody's Arms, a chaise-cart of a Saxonhurst quack, and in ten minutes we are scouring the roads, steep, downhill, round corners, across bridges, which lead to the old place. It was freezing, and the air sharp and keen. It was very strange for the grown-up schoolboy of that Christmas night, as he swept along, recognizing such familiar landmarks; when at last the gate swung open, and the smooth avenue was under the wheels, and umbrageous thick plantations began to shut out the sombre blue canopy of night, above which rose the huge dark block of building, under whose shadow we were driving, and which from side to side, from top to bottom, was dappled with lights, a genial inviting light seen through crimson curtains. In another moment, a great arched porch was over our heads, and the driver was pulling at a rope which made a bell clang far off. It was curious to look round, and see, through the two quaint piers, the long straight avenue, on each side of which lay the two Dutch ponds a quarter of a mile long, and which were as white as bride-cakes—finest most inspiring fields of ice, up and down which the whole house had been flying all the day. Then

the Gothic church to the left ; the great Elizabethan building to the right ; and now, as the arched doorway was opened and the noble old courtyard revealed, to catch the faint and distant hum of voices—I say all this sent a queer thrill through the grown-up schoolboy.

That old courtyard would have been worthy of an historical novel, with hexagonal towers at the corners, mullioned windows in abundance, and a noble flight of steps that went in tiers to the door of the baronial hall. Lights flashed along the windows, but all the long range to the left were draped in the traditionary illuminated crimson. Here was the old picture-gallery, and for that point the grown-up schoolboy made straight. Long corridors, panelled walls, strange faces and figures passing and repassing, and looking at the stranger ; then the oak-floored lobby, a hum and chatter of voices, a door open and I see that long picture-gallery filling with crowds of figures, faces but dimly recognized in the light. There were visitors, fathers and uncles and guardians of the boys—a sort of universal gathering. Light and cheery were faces and voices ; and very welcome the air of innocent enjoyment over every face, with that heartiness and relish which comes by living among books and in the country. To the old schoolboy it seemed so strange and visionary as he walked up the room, a dim recognition seemed to come up—beaming eyes were turned towards him—dozens of hands were held out—cordial voices greeted—it was one genial chorus of “Ah ! how *are* you ?” (the stress laid upon the “are”), “*You* here !” What greetings, what delightful recognitions ! Then, as the crowd moved open, a figure would come out—some one who had travelled from afar off to welcome the grown-up schoolboy.

Then what welcome! "My dear old boy, I am so glad! See, our Jack is over there. What have you been doing with yourself?" These were now grown men, but whom we had parted from in the curtailed jacket of youth. A flood of questions, of friendly recollections, were poured out. Then there was a gradual motion to the door. The theatre was open; it was nearly time for the curtain to rise, and we walked on slowly, still talking and recalling. Saxonhurst was famous for its theatre and plays. The distinguished company, "the nobs," visitors, and the like, always moved to their places, passing across the stage, the curtain being drawn aside at one corner. As we emerged into the light, there appeared in front a vast inclined plane of joyous faces, shifting and glittering almost as if the sun was playing over it, which it was in the shape of good spirits and enjoyment. There was an exuberant delight abroad, which it was impossible not to catch, which, if it could be imported into the world outside, would be worth vast sums of money; but these schoolboys have the private patent. A flood of light bathed the old and familiar proscenium, now some twenty or thirty years old, and was thought a triumph of pictorial art. Grecian temple and pillars, Comedy and Tragedy, cheerful crimson draperies, and of course the worthy William in the centre. In front of all was the school orchestra, and the leader (a nervous, sprightly, bald-headed little man—an old friend), Mr. Le Bois, who played every known instrument. A quick-step inaugurated the performance with great spirit, the drum making itself conspicuous. Then the curtain rose on the old familiar "Castle Spectre." Earl Osman, the most villainous of villains; Hassan, the most demoniacal and malignant of black slaves; the facetious

gourmand, and the exciting scenes, and the old-fashioned but charming music—never was there a play so suited to the capacities and interests of a school. Every one hung suspended on the exciting chain of events; and when the Prince was in his dungeon, the guards gambling, and the sweet sounds of "Sing Megano! sing meganee," inviting him to escape, and he rose softly, and climbed up to the window and threw himself from it, the roar of applause showed the intensity of relief! It was curious for the grown-up schoolboy, for he himself had long ago spouted and declaimed upon those boards and played on that responsive instrument.

The air about Saxonhurst is of the rawest and most bracing kind. It was a shivering business being up betimes to gaslight, hurrying down the corridors, the hoar-covered ground outside gleaming in the blue morning air. The courtyard where we met, as we passed to breakfast, would have been welcomed by Mr. George Cattermole and embodied in a sketch—the sides of the building broken by towers; stray lights in stray windows, day breaking; the great flight of stairs leading up into the Gothic banquetting-hall. For the day that followed—too short for the grown-up schoolboy—there was delightful occupation: skating on the long Dutch ponds, a walk of ten miles or so across crisp fields, the revisiting old scenes. On one day during the season was celebrated, in an *official* manner, the Christmas festival. A great banquet in the great banquetting-hall was offered to the friends and to the squires living about. I recall the great picture-gallery, the room of reception on these occasions, crowded from end to end. There was a softness and a pleasure in the many greetings that was almost tender. I have

found nothing so piquant or so welcome since, in the little surprises of life. I see the banqueting-room, with its stained-glass windows; the long oak table crowded. I hear the hum of delightful voices, the pleasant chat, the very strangeness of the whole. Then came the slow breaking up, and the visit to the theatre, where the players acted their part in honour of their visitors. That scene, the cheerful red curtain, the scenery, and actors, has the ghostly air of a dream. If I went there now it would, no doubt, be grim prose; but I cherish that Christmas vision of the grown-up schoolboy, and would not let it go for anything.

And then we all collected in the great baronial hall, waiting till another festival should set in—an oyster supper, of which there were two always at this season. A long table, with some fifty oyster-openers, and as many strong ale drinkers, the only beverage conceded as accompaniment to the lusty bivalves, of which barrels were present. There was no aristocratic opening by deputy. Every one had to acquire the accomplishment on the spot or go without. The risk of maiming and fraying, therefore, lent an excitement. But the cheerfulest part was the line of faces, all familiar and half-familiar; altered in figure, altered in dress from the old times, all giving way to the most exuberant good humour. Then a breaking up, with a welcome whisper from two or three choice hands to meet half an hour hence in "some one's" room, to have a cigar and a long, long, delightful chatter over old days. "Some one's room" is up in the centre tower, just over the yawning archway, and under the great chiming clock. We gather there quietly, for it is against rule, and sit on and on, and smoke on and on, until the chimes above have grown quite familiar,

like old friends, from repetition. It is a welcome subscription of items of news, about Jack, and Dick, and Tom—*poor* Tom, who broke his neck hunting last year. Where was A.? Oh! but did you hear about B.? I met him two months ago with, etc. And C.? A bright blazing fire, bright gas, the cosiest of chairs,—and then until close upon two o'clock we listen on, our clanking, husky friend more and more noisily reminding us of the hours, until at last, with two severe thuds, which we felt along the walls, he echoed out "Two!" Then we broke up, and through long passages and galleries, with the gas-jets diminished to a faint blue speck of light, we stole away to our rooms. Sleep was very welcome after the weary day.

Other nights wound up with what was called "the Good Supper," given to the artists, who had so entertained the audience during the season. These were given in the great hall, while far down the shadows hung thickly, and through the mul-lioned windows and the coats of arms emblazoned, the moonlight came streaming. The fragrant punch travelled round, so did the song and chorus, every one who sang being entitled to call on another. The pleasant stories and jests went round until the clock began chiming. Then we all broke up. We would linger in the courtyard, where the moonlight was streaming down aslant, and smoke a placid cigar. So the days went by, until the last night came round, with the "stranger's play." There was a prologue *à propos*, a vigorous drama which the greater experience of the players made to go off well, the whole to conclude with one of the newest screaming farces. To the grown-up schoolboy, who, as it were, led, the burst of greeting as he appeared

was inexpressibly welcome. Every one did his best; the peals of laughter and the thorough enjoyment were inspiring. The "screaming" farce was borne triumphantly on the sympathetic wings of unbounded applauses to a triumphant issue. The recalls, the custom of launching bouquets, were there unknown; but if oranges or cherished cakes could have been showered without risk of hurt to the object of such homage, we might have been overwhelmed under such testimonials. As it was, a prolonged shouting—the whole house standing up to give their lungs better play—and sustained for many moments, made the rafters ring. So that night ended. With the raw dawn, the rousing betimes in the darkness, the hurried breakfast by gaslight, and a chaise seen dashing through the open gateway, that joyful and gracious holiday came to an end for the grown-up school-boy. On such terms we might all be tempted to wish the old wheel of Time turned backwards for a short time, and that we might for the season—for this Christmas at least—become grown-up schoolboys.

In spite of the somewhat profane jeers at old Christmas and the "holly business," supposed to be about as theatrical as the masks and armour of a burlesque, this good old season has still a charm and tender bloom of its own which is thoroughly genuine. Of course, if there be anything like overdoing the thing, any getting up of an artificial joviality, the natural result is flatness, disappointment, and even despondency. There has, indeed, been a little too much of estranged brothers, whose return is timed with miraculous accuracy for Christmas Eve, and who are brought in to the baronial hall, and made welcome—too much of hard old fellows reformed

and softened—by plum-pudding and a Christmas dinner. But, after all, if the festival be “taken naturally,” and as it comes—say on the morning itself, when the bells are chiming and the people hurrying to church—there is a gentle glow, a flush, a quiet melancholy, which attends no other known anniversary. This, on analysis, is chiefly associated with recollection. Our thoughts go back to days when the “table was full,” when it was lined with faces and figures—faces that have disappeared altogether, figures that are now so changed that we can hardly recognize them; an old dispensation that seems, so far off is it, like some lovely pictures in a play—days of youth faded for ever! The proof that there is this charm in Christmas is to be found in the fact that so many protest that the festival is painful or even disagreeable to them, because associated with happy meetings and dear persons long since passed away. A man who has passed thirty or so must of necessity have seen many Christmas days of varied complexions; for those yet older there must be a still more motley retrospect. A few come back on me now, the recalling of which will be in tune with the present review.

One Christmas day comes back on me, again associated with the kitchen. A newly married pair, recently embarked in housekeeping, had secured a treasure in the shape of a portly matron, who was to act as cook and general servant until the house was “mounted” in a satisfactory manner. This lady was in the habit of introducing her husband, and as it turned out had surreptitiously introduced him in the capacity of lodger, as well as boarder. His presence was, however, handsomely sanctioned on Christmas Day, a concession that must have amused the

pair. Master and mistress having each parted from an affectionate circle—now far away—had no materials available, with which to fill a round table with smiling faces. They had, therefore, gone out to a cheerful house, where the host and hostess had gathered a select party of friends, and where the evening had gone by with much quiet enjoyment. On their return, when the door was opened to them, an agitated female face was visible, and almost at once there rose furious sounds of angry voices, of cries even, and of animated furniture. "For Heaven's sake, would master go below and part them? They were killing one another." Some friends in the same profession with the lady-of-all-work's husband—he was a tailor—had quarrelled with the rest, and the matter was being resolved in the way that used to be usual among gentlemen. One guest had protested that "he would have the blood" of his host. The ladies of the party were clinging to the infuriated combatants, who, with coats off and chairs flourished aloft, were desperately determined—the one to have, the other to preserve the blood alluded to.

There are houses where to dine on Christmas Day comes next to the pleasures of the family circle. Such festivals are usually given by some pair without family; the gentleman may be a man of many friends, and with a certain position, and who likes to gather about him those old, warm friends who themselves looked forward to these days of meeting, and had no "olive branches" at home. The night passes by under a mellow and golden light, smiles and good humour are present, and we go home in a quiet and subdued tone of mind.

Christmas abroad is disheartening enough, and

instead of bringing on jollity brings depression. You are a mere exile; the rejoicings affect you with a certain dreariness. But it must be said that in foreign countries the rejoicing is more spiritual, less material, and has the air of a religious rite. The snow somehow does not seem to attend so regularly, though it is bitterly cold, and there is a generally bleak and marrow-piercing blast abroad. One season was thus spent in the sands and resins of Arcachon, a place of small châteaux and tiny bungalows, with only half a dozen English settlers. The bustling, cosy grocer of the place, who broke his English as he did his lump sugar, found it profitable to affect a certain jollity of a comestible sort, and sent in all manner of pseudo delicacies which he supposed were appropriate to the season. Perched on a hill and overlooking the sea was the new church to Our Lady of Arcachon, a handsome pile, but where the music was in the hands or mouth of one of those brazen-throated official chanters who in France do duty for organ and choir, and who contrive to sing with an untunefulness maintained with a marvellous accuracy of tone. This grinder did duty on ordinary occasions; but a few days before Christmas Day a rumour got abroad of some amazing musical preparations by which the glory of the festival was to be enhanced. Our landlord was a stout, cask-shaped being, with the usual self-conscious air which never deserts a Frenchman under even the most trying physique. This gentleman's name was Poque; he had musical tastes and a piano, which, like his own voice, could only be called the remains of a fine instrument. He used, however, the recipe always valuable in such cases, namely, to supply—by oratorical vehemence and facial expression—the

musical sounds that were wanting. One morning it was known through the town that the *curé* had sought an interview by special appointment with this gentleman, and on his departure delighted maids and menials came with the great news that "M. Poque was to sing at the midnight Mass." The same intelligence reached to the shops, and with every article purchased came smiles of congratulation. How charming it was! M. Poque, Mr. or Mrs.'s landlord, was to sing at the midnight Mass; as if a special obligation was laid upon the tenant so fortunate in possessing an harmonious landlord! By-and-by sounds of practice were heard overhead, with much cantering over scales; the great Poque exercising himself. The congratulations were kept up until the festival day itself. The night arrived; a bitter, frosty one, with the moon out, and there was something picturesque in the shadowy pines, and the brightly illuminated roads covered with figures—Frenchwomen in their neat caps, husbands, and sweethearts. The church blazed with light. The ceremonies were imposing, and even touching, with a welcome simplicity. There were flowers, and hymns by the young girls, and, of course, the indefatigable "chanter." Then the good pastor ascended the pulpit, and gave a little sermon, judiciously short, not more than seven or eight minutes. Then the organ began the symphony, and at last, M. Poque, with much quivering, much rolling of his *r*'s, but with very slender musical sound, gave out the Christmas hymn. A gentleman, who fancied he was acquainted with the strain, joined in most discordantly, as if in ridicule. I noted also crowds of faces below, upturned to the gallery.

I am ashamed to say the irreverent Frenchmen,

who crowded the church to the door, standing up as is their wont and conversing, gave way to loud roars of laughter at this failure of their townsman, without the least regard to the sacredness of the place. The performance broke down, and the whole scene was anything but edifying.

CHAPTER XVI.

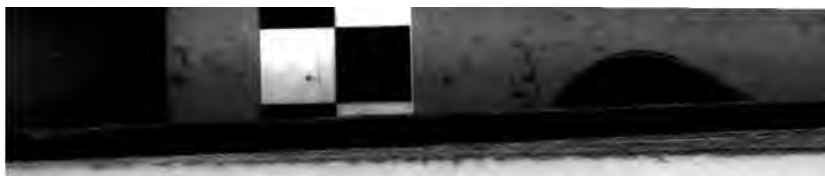
OUR SUBURBAN COMMON.

KEW Common is familiar and ordinary ground enough. Like Sterne's *désobligeante*, "something might be said for it, but not much; but when a man by a few words," etc. Yet with a short week, spent thus in rurality, it became a glorified common. It was pleasant to think of.

The common enjoys a great publicity, and has at the same time a privacy of its own. For the London road cuts straight across it, approaching, however, with a sort of respect, abating its stiff pretensions, and condescending to a sort of narrow rustic approach, before it enters on the expanse of our common. Then the strangers aloft on the omnibuses wonder at our rural and quietly picturesque air; and the superior tenants of the open carriages look around approvingly and say, "What a retired, old-fashioned spot!" The carters and waggoners, of whom there is a vast number, are never troubled with speculations of the kind. All they think about is simply the Wheel of Fortune public-house, whose tap enjoys a wide celebrity, not, however, unaided by singular local advantages. The Wheel of Fortune commands the entry to our common; sweeps, rakes that entry, as though it

were a fort, and levels its pieces so seductively, that he must be no true waggoner who can avoid halting in that convenient plateau, just to moisten his parched throat after that dusty bit of travel. There is a glaring publicity along the broad high-road, which is seen for half a mile, and the better principle has time to muster its forces ; but here there is no time for reflection, for the victim finds himself under the guns of the fortress in a second, and must surrender.

Our common is a large sweep of green, stretching away, and bounded on all sides by veteran houses. It would be impossible to define its shape accurately. It rambles away after its own devices. Indeed, taking its shape in connection with the texture of its grass, it often suggests to me a vast and ragged old blanket, worn and ravelled away out of its original square, and stretched and tacked down over our common. A rather rickety white fence, consisting of a single rail, straggles round it, and within this enclosure a veteran and bony steed browses away, though the green blanket is worn into holes and patches, while round him younger and equally mendicant horses take their meals. In the morning it is a favourite pastime to go and see two or three unhappy men striving to catch these animals, halter in hand. The steeds are slowly driven into a corner with much waving of arms and menace, and, I must say, much nervousness on the part of the men, as they seem on the eve of securing their prey. The old pony, in whom his followers seem to have implicit confidence, throws a careless glance over his impatient shoulder, as he retires, which is full of significance. He is biding his time, as his enemies well know, and malignantly chooses the moment when the halter is almost on his neck to give his signal. In



an instant he throws up his heels, makes a feint to the right, another to the left, causing his oppressors to dance backwards and forwards, and fiercely is away through an opening, his old heels up again, followed by the whole party, save one little roan, who is cut off.

I delight in the irregularity of the old houses which fringe our common, not two of which are of the same height or stoutness. They are all veterans, a good deal decayed, and seem to lean on each other for support. Nearly all have old rusty, red-tiled roofs, which are scooped like shells or spoons. Some have thick warm "ulsters" of ivy that reach to their very heels, and give a very cosy air. Off our common are various green lanes, in one of which a builder, with more taste than is found in such beings, has erected a long row of Elizabethan little buildings, less than villas, more than cottages, many of which for some reason unknown stand unlet. In front is a hedgerow and green fields, and the tea-gardens of the Wheel of Fortune, where of Sundays and holidays re-echo the humorous notes of our London 'Arry and his female friend. In fine weather these little tabernacles are charming, with the Virginia creepers overgrowing the whole front of the house, their little rooms, French windows, and tiny kitchens like the forecastle of a yacht. If one were a writer of very limited means, one could do well in these establishments, for the rent is no more than thirty pounds a year, and the fee-simple can be purchased for three or four hundred pounds. Here an anxious, wiry woman, with corkscrew curls, considerably older than her half-military, half-tailor-like husband, looks after our wants, and talks with nervous awe of the Wheel of Fortune and Mr. Lightband, the proprietor; for in the associations

connected with our common I can see that the Wheel of Fortune and Lightband hold an awful place. Everything seems to be referred to the Wheel of Fortune. Its proprietor is the link between it and the outer world, and is supposed to be rolling in wealth. If anything be wanted we can send up to the Wheel. If there is a difficulty we can ask at the Wheel. When everything is run out it can be got at the Wheel. The stray butcher, stray grocer, stray baker may fail, which they often do, but we run to the Wheel, and all is repaired.

Our common is ordinarily a dreamy sort of place, and seem to doze and blink in the sun all day. The church, an old-fashioned structure, is set down in the middle with a little tray of dominoes behind it, which are its tombstones, and which are enclosed so neatly within the edges of the tray that one almost expects some gigantic footman to come and "take away." A royal duchess comes sometimes and sits in state. But on Sunday evenings no one would know our common; all access to the Wheel is cut off by a block of light carts, waggonettes, hansom, and "shandrydans," while inside the open windows can be seen innumerable 'Arrys and Jemimars in the full display of that half-amatory, half-gormandizing joviality, which is their notion of happiness, 'Arry's "harm" (meaning, of course, a limb) finding its permanent position of repose round Jemimar's waist. As we pass down to the other extremity of our common, to its river-side, we find whole lines of gigs and Whitechapels, in a rickety state of genuflexion about the shafts, their horses picketed about or bestowed in stables. Every house in the row is devoted to "Tea at ninepence," affects a kind of rustic air, and by the aid of a few flower-

pots ambitions the designation of "tea-gardens." As the evening wears on the merriment becomes uproarious. Should one be inclined to take counsel with the keeper of the pike on the bridge, he could give us some strange little illustrations of our 'Arry's mode of taking his fun ; sport to him, but, in a commercial sense, death to the pike-keeper.

This, again, is uneventful, and may seem scarcely worth recording. But round such places and season cluster associations, which are welcome to every one—just as you will hear a gourmand recall, with delight, the best-done dish of cutlets he ever tasted in his life, procured at some little mean, unpretending inn.

CHAPTER XVII.

MY DOGS—THE VIXENS.

THE literary man should surely have his dog, a true companion and faithful, but well chosen, not to be made a "pet," but a friend of. Most dogs have good qualities, and if unspoiled and treated honestly by their masters, will repay any kindness. There are, of course, some hopelessly foolish or vicious creatures. I have been fortunate in a series of these trusty companions—from Cæsar the Newfoundland, who performed in the "Dog of Montargis," to my late ten years' favourite and companion, TOBY. All are more or less bound up with my numerous literary tasks and speculations: have, as it were, looked on, and assisted, and unconsciously encouraged the writer at his work.

I must first tell of "Vixen," an early friend;

a very yellow, wiry, not to say stubbly terrier of the middle size, with ears cropped sharply, iron-grey whiskers, and a general air of watchful inquiry for rats; who, having run away, was brought back with a string round her, by a ragged boy. This is Vixen the First, originally purchased in open market. Her ransom was half a crown. Her first introduction to the family had been from under a hall chair. When it was attempted to draw her from this lair (by the neck), she growled and snapped. On this display of an evil soul, it was almost resolved to deport her, but on entreaty one chance was given her, of which she availed herself so speedily, so engagingly, as to become a universal favourite, the best of companions, most honest of creatures. This was in the old days. She shared in everything. As her master read and studied, she had her corner, where, coiled up into something like a snail-shell, and making a pillow of her own hind leg, she dreamed the most exquisite dreams, and groaned over charming processions of endless rats. There were more delightful holidays when the sun was shining, and we went forth for a whole day's walking: when we came to the park and the copses, and sat under a tree, and basked in the sun; the master finding "Rookwood" excellent company, while the Vixen, with a profoundly business-like air, cultivated natural history, and explored the district as if she were a canine botanist, bound to report on the Flora of the region. Sometimes she would start a rabbit, and pursue it; but these were rare openings. Very pleasant were those bivouacs, and I feel the scent of the May blossoms floating past me now.

Once, there was a large review of soldiers in this place, and we agreed to go together, as usual.

But I noticed that the Vixen was rather taken aback by the long files of red coats: taking a few steps towards them, halting, and, with suspicious inquiry in the nostrils, scrutinizing the arrangements up and down. She did not like the distant bugle, and looked round uneasily. But when the artillery came thundering and clanking up beside us, and the first gun and the second nearly shook her off her balance, without a second's delay, she fled, with ears down, body stretched out, hare-like, a victim of sudden panic, scouring the wide plain. I beheld her between two lines of soldiers. I saw her through the smoke, giving one hurried glance over her shoulder. For her, the end of *her* world was come. Pandemonium was at her heels. Grief and rage filled my heart. My companion was gone for ever—gone into that cloud of smoke. I should never see her again. I made a vain attempt at pursuit, but she grew into a yellow speck, far away over the plain. It was all over. I was alone. I was miles from home, and towards home I now went, moodily, and in deep grief. There, faces of surprise and eager questions met me. "What have you done with the Vixen?" Tired and heated, not in the mood to be questioned, I entered the study, about to fling myself into the easy-chair, and mourn privately and wearily. When lo! I see *in* the easy-chair, fagged also, and very dusty and travel-stained, the yellow runaway, the *sauve qui peut*, lifting her head, as if it were from a pillow, languidly, wagging her tail, uncertain whether about to receive punishment or congratulation. She had never taken that journey before, yet had made her way home by an unfamiliar road, and must have travelled at headlong speed.

We were always on the best and most familiar

terms, and yet she had a quick temper. She was passionate; but *she knew that failing, and controlled it.* On a few occasions a little chastisement was threatened, and she retreated under a chair, and there, as from a fortification, looked out, all tusks, and teeth, and snarl, with her upper lip turned inside out, filled with a demoniacal fury. The next moment she would be all love and friendliness.

She was not regarded with much favour above stairs, as wanting refinement and elegant manners. Once when there was company, a gentleman playing the violin—an instrument she detested—the door was pushed open softly, and she entered, bearing a large junk of stolen beef! There was a kind of pride in her achievement, an air of guilt, and also of stolid audacity in the manner in which she entered, walking slowly and leisurely in through the midst of the company—half skulking, half inviting attention, her eyes rolling round the corner towards her master with a comic expression of doubt. The scene was true comedy, for it was a polite meeting—silks and fine clothes, tea and the “quality”—and the intruder, wiry and unkempt and a little dusty, had come direct from the stable.

Vixen the First lived many years, during which we enjoyed many delightful country walks together, and she killed innumerable rats, and swam in rivers and brooks, and fought other dogs with credit and reputation, and was a most pliant and entertaining companion. Sometimes her tastes, being of a vagabond sort, led her away from home in the company of dogs about town, who were of wild and even profligate manners. These excesses gave her a taste for the pleasures of the table, and an immoderate fancy for meat,

which had the usual fatal results of a free life. In due time she was laid up with an attack of the malady so fatal to dogs. There was the usual fierce scratchings, and finally the wiry hair began to come off in patches. Eminent physicians were called in, but no cure could be effected. Her rage for meat, however, was not to be eradicated—nay, it developed with restraint; and a fatal outrage, when she was detected on the tablecloth after lunch, in the act of trying to get a convenient hold of a limbless fowl, preparatory to carrying it away, caused a council to be held at once in reference to her case. It was resolved, after a secret deliberation, to get rid of Vixen the First: not, I am happy to say, by execution or other violent measures, but by conferring her as a gift on a gentleman in the country, who fortunately had a taste for "varmint," and for this reason was willing to overlook much. But here she could not overcome her old appetites, whetted by sharp country air and pastimes; and we were soon grieved to learn that the amateur of "varmint" had found himself constrained to part with his useful assistant. More than two years later, at a seaside place, a decayed-looking "cur" came creeping across the street from the heels of a Sikes-looking fellow, and looked up to me with wistful recognition, as though half afraid that such acknowledgment would take the shape of the prompt and sharp kick. There was something very piteous in this cringing self-depreciation. The dog, too, was thin and bony, and the tail, once carried so jauntily, as a knowing fellow wears his hat, was now gathered up timorously under the legs. Suddenly Sikes gave a whistle and a sharp curse, and the luckless animal slunk off. That was the last I saw of Vixen the First.

A year or so later, some one brings to the house a little diminutive Skye terrier, coal black, rough-haired, not uncomely, and about two hands long. This gentleman is known as "Jack." Being a lady's property, he is forthwith pampered, and made free of drawing-rooms and bed-rooms: which I feel acutely as a retrospective injustice to the memory of the lost Vixen the First.

Jack was, I suppose, the most delightful instance of real, natural, undisguised *selfishness* that could be conceived. Loaded with benefits, stuffed with delicacies, he made not the slightest pretence of caring for any one in the world. In justice to him, it must be admitted that he never attempted to bite; but after his meal, or indeed at any season, when he was stretched at length on his rug, any endearments from even the privileged hand of his mistress were resented with testy growlings. The only one for whom he had toleration or the faint appearance of regard was a person of low degree, an old retainer of the family, who kept a little whip privately for his special behoof, and who used to hold conversations with him through the pantry-window: "I'll give you the whip, I will," "I'll teach you," etc. To this official, I am glad to say for the sake of our common animal nature, he was almost fawning in his behaviour, making affectation of being overjoyed to see him, and when the retainer would return, after an absence of a week, going—artful hypocrite!—into convulsions of whinings, jumpings, and such pretences of delight. His mistress has been away a month, and he has been known to trot up the kitchen stairs to see what the commotion of her return might be about, stand at a distance, look on at the new arrival, then coolly turn his back, and strut leisurely down again, as though

the matter was unworthy his attention! Yet it was almost impossible not to feel an interest in him, for this very indifference or independence. And he had his good points also. He was a gentleman; seemed always to recollect his good birth and breeding, and no persuasions of servants could retain him below in their kitchen quietly save in very cold weather, when he had his reasons for engaging the great fire there. Faithful to his principles, he knew their dinner hour to the moment, and no seductions of high society would *then* prevent his going down to join them at that desirable time. Sometimes, if detained above by stratagem, he would at last escape, and would come galloping in among them, panting, with an air as though he were conferring a favour, and as who should say, "I was unavoidably detained, but I have tried hard to make up for lost time."

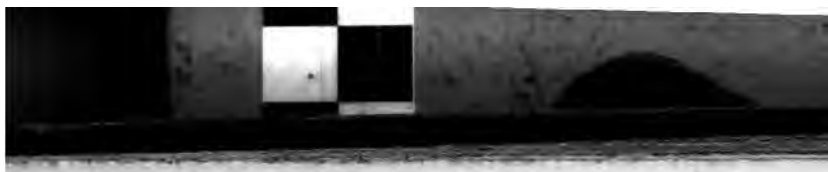
Another merit of his was rare personal courage. He was afraid of no one, man, woman, child, or dog. For so tiny a creature this was really to be admired. Attack him with a stick or umbrella, and he would stand on his defence, with his face honourably towards you, growling, snarling, and even *mewling* with rage, and all the time retiring cleverly and slowly until he got to shelter.

In the streets he trotted along with infinite dignity, and towards other dogs bore himself with a haughty contempt. Nothing was more amusing than to see a big, frisking, free-mannered dog run at him and coolly tumble him over in the dust, and to see the little outraged fellow pick himself up, all over dust, growling and snarling with rage and mortification. More amusing still was it to see a great Newfoundland dog stalk up, not quite sure whether this could be a rat, or one of his own

species, whom he was bound to respect. As he became importunate in his curiosity, and troublesome in his half-friendly, half-hostile attention, it was delicious to see Jack turn and snap deliberately at him, sputtering rage, while the giant would start back confounded, not knowing what to make of it.

Seven, eight, nine years roll by, and he is actually getting to be a little old gentleman. He wheezes and coughs a good deal as he goes upstairs. His black eyes are not so brilliant as of yore. But he has become snappish and impatient, more testy and selfish than ever. He is, in fact, just like other old gentlemen. His appetite is just as great, and he *will* eat hearty meals, which, however, do not agree with him; and though he is usually unwell after these hearty banquets, the lesson is quite thrown away on him. His fine black whiskers have turned grey and rusty. In the house, too, changes have taken place. He has lost friends, and it grieves me to think that in these old days of his he found a change, and learnt what the world was. I wonder did he make a sort of Wolsey reflection on the world, when, with much wheezing and coughing, he had toiled upstairs, and coming confidently in at the drawing-room would be met with a stern "Go down, sir!—go down!" But what could one do for him? He had, besides, an affection of the hinder leg, something in the nature of slight paralytic stroke, brought on by excess at table.

Another wiry yellow dog arrives on the scene, carried in the arms of a Jewish-looking gentleman, in a squirrel cap, whose profession is dogs—with so gentle and amiable an air about her, and with such a resemblance to my old favourite, that I at once redeem her from captivity for the sum

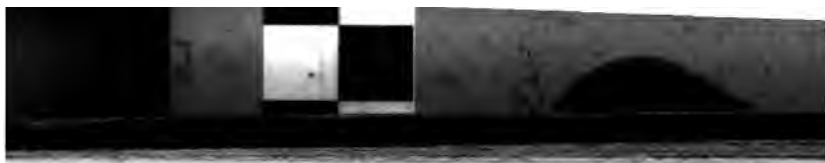


of fifteen shillings, and christen her "Vixen the Second."

She was the strangest combination in physique ; with the yellow wiry-haired body of the ordinary terrier, she had the snout of the bull-terrier, perfectly coal black, and the brightest and largest of black eyes darting forward like dark carbuncles. With this truculent and remarkable exterior she showed herself the most engaging and gentle creature. Children shrank from her as she jogged by with the true bull-dog, wary, business-like air. But she did not want for pluck or courage, as every street boy knew—a class whom she regarded with detestation. Half a mile away, the sight of a pair of bare legs, a cap, and a torn jacket threw her into a fury: down went her head and ears, and she was off like an arrow, and presently flying round the bare legs. She was up to anything in the way of sport or gamesomeness, and if pursued by any rough, at whose heels she had been flying, would retreat under a cart, and there stand snarling and spitting horribly. Sometimes correction became necessary, and then she would take her corporal punishment with eyes closed fast, shrinking away from it, and crouching, but with true Spartan fortitude, never uttering even a yelp. Her intelligence was surprising. If her master assumed an expression of displeasure, she grew disturbed and uneasy. There was a favourite exercise to show off her sagacity. When he was reading and she half snoozing with her chin on her fore paws, he would say in a low, quiet voice of displeasure, "What made you do it? What do you mean?" Her first motion would be to raise her head and look round in a mournfully deprecating way, as who should say, "What is it, master?" If the reproach were repeated, she

would look again with her great sad eyes, the tail pleading slowly, and finally raising herself in the most deprecating way, would steal over, and, with a sort of groan, would raise herself on her hind legs and piteously implore forgiveness. The moment she saw a smile, her tail wagged joyfully and she went back.

She had the sweetest disposition, this Vixen the Second. She had even taught herself, Heaven knows how, a sort of moral restraint and discipline. She had her rule of life, based upon what she thought would be pleasing to him who guided her existence. Take an instance. We all know those harmless salutations and flirtations interchanged among those of her race, who are perfect strangers to each other, and which appear almost an etiquette. No one had so keen a zest for these interviews as Vixen. Her remarkable air, a little bizarre, but highly attractive, drew crowds of admirers around her. Yet when they came with their insidious homage, she would indeed stop, for she knew what was due to the courtesies; she would, for a second, be dazzled; but in another moment the moral principle had asserted itself, and with a secret agony—for the struggle cost her much, she was dog after all—she tore herself away, and came rushing to make up for even that second's dalliance. On one occasion only did her resolution fail her, and that was when a matchless bull-terrier, of a dazzling snow-white, and an exquisite shape, breed, and symmetry, made some advances. He was dressed in the height of the mode, richly, with a collar decorated around with silver and most musical bells. This captivating creature was too much for her; she was deaf to all angry calls—threats even—seemed determined to pursue this fascinating acquaintance, and pre-



pared to give up all and follow him. But this was a brief intoxication.

For Vixen the Second, the kitchen had not that charm which it has for other dogs. Neither had she that liking for ostlers, footmen, etc., which her kind usually entertain. She was always scheming to get upstairs; below, her ears were always strained for the far-off whistle; indeed, her organization was so delicate, and her affection so strong, that she knew the peculiar sound of her master's step as the hall-door opened and he entered. After breakfast every morning there was heard a faint "pat-pat" on the oilcloth in the hall, drawing nearer. Those who watched her found that this was her favourite *secret* gait, with which she contrived to make escape from below when they wished to detain her, thus passing the pantry-door on tiptoe. Sitting at his study table, her master would see her moving inward mysteriously, and presently a wistful nose and a pair of more wistful eyes were introduced, softly looking round the edge, and saying as plain as nose and eyes could say, "Do let me come in, please." She would stay in that position until the solicited invitation was given, then enter on her favourite gait, receive congratulations, and proceed to make her favourite turnings round and round before coiling herself properly. Often, with a heavy sigh, she would let herself drop full length upon her side and lie out lazily. This was all sheer coquetry, for she could have entered boldly and in the usual way of her kind. The only exception was after washing day, below: a terrible ceremony, which she shrank from. When she saw the large tub brought out, she skulked under the table with signs of horror and repulsion; then, in the first unguarded moment, disappeared into some strange

and ingenious place of concealment, which for a long time defied the strictest search. After this washing operation was happily over, she would come bursting in abruptly, her wiry hair standing on end through imperfect drying, and would go prancing about, snuffing and coughing, evidently thrown off her centre by the operation. It was the soap, I think, which affected her, through the smell of the alkali employed. It was no craven shrinking from the water, for she swam bravely : and on the coldest days, when curs were cowering away from the water's edge, she would plunge in boldly to fetch out sticks, evidently in obedience to her high sense of duty, though trembling with cold, and much buffeted by the rough waves.

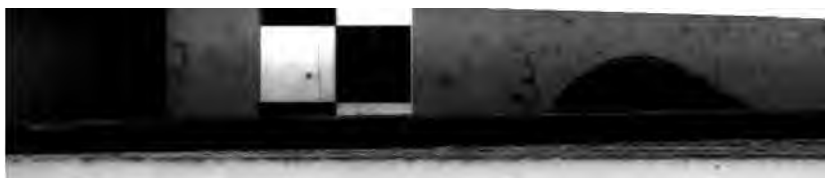
Jack, still alive, shared in all our excursions, and shared Vixen the Second's kennel. At last, however, the time came when these pleasant relations were to be broken up for ever. Old Jack began to fail, yet gradually. When the cheerful cry for going abroad reached him, he would rise, walk a short way eagerly, then recollect himself, as it were, and go back. He preferred his easy-chair by the fire. He grew more cross every day, or rather hour. He found the temperature of his own private house in the yard too severe, and used actually to simulate exhaustion, to get taken in and be laid before the kitchen fire, and treated with tenderness and interest by female hands. He would bask in that agreeable atmosphere, lying with an almost comic languor, apparently without sense or motion, save when any one touched him as if to remove him, when he would forget his part and emit a low cantankerous growl. Seeing the success of this manoeuvre, he often resorted to it, until the public at last refused to be so imposed on, and rather neglected his touching

symptoms. This only made him more peevish and disagreeable. A more genuine symptom was the small size to which he was shrinking: growing smaller every hour; originally small, he had become now of a very tiny pattern—his rich black coat had grown rusty, and his dark face and muzzle had turned an iron grey. In these later days he took refuge in a sort of indifference, which had the air of a wounded reserve. He kept himself to himself, as it were. Invited in, he did not seem to care to accept civilities. The paralytic affection seemed to gain on him, arching his back, and drawing up his hinder leg. Poor old Jack!

One winter evening set in more than usually severe—frosty, with a bitter wind. Events of some importance had been going forward in the mansion, and throughout the day, beyond the customary invitation to come and take his breakfast, not much notice had been bestowed on him. Later, at a less engrossing period, a faithful maid, perhaps feeling compunction, went to look after him and bring him in. He was discovered, his meal, untouched, lying near him, cold and collapsed, and with scarcely any sign of life. He was carried in tenderly, and carefully laid down on the warm hearth, and rubbed carefully and assiduously. The sight of his loved kitchen fire, and its genial warmth—the sun to which this little canine Parsee always turned his face with something like idolatry—seemed to draw him back to life. His eyes opened languidly, his little shrunken body glowed anew. But as he made an effort to get nearer to the fire, the head dropped over quietly, and the hinder leg gave a little twitch. Life had ebbed away very gently. A simple basket, containing his poor old remains, was carried unostentatiously to a neighbouring square, where a friendly gar-

dener, who had often noted him taking his easy morning constitutional over the pleasant sward, undertook the sexton's duty, and performed the last decent offices in a pretty flower-bed. Vixen the Second attended as mourner, at the same time exhibiting an uneasy curiosity about the basket; otherwise she showed no concern.

If Vixen had a penchant, it was for butchers' shops: which she discovered afar off, and to which, if we were on the other side of the street, she crossed over, in a most circuitous and artful fashion, and with a guilty creeping way, quite foreign to her. She entered privately under the counter, crept round leisurely, and invariably secured some choice "swag." Indeed, some of her robberies were too daring, as on the day of a joint visit to a confectioner's shop, when she partook of various morsels tossed to her, yet lingered behind on some pretext. She was presently seen to emerge at full speed from the confectioner's door, carrying with infinite difficulty a large bath bun in her jaws, the confectioner himself in angry pursuit. How she got possession of this delicacy could not be ascertained; he said, "it were when his back was turned," an affront he seemed to feel. He was, of course, indemnified. When taken to sit for her portrait, she imparted a dramatic element into that operation. The thorough investigation she made; the sniffing at the chemicals; the speculation as to the apparatus, camera, etc., which seemed to have some suspicious connection with firearms; the searching behind the theatrical draperies; but when business came, her sense of duty at once asserted itself, and the operator owned that he had found his human sitters more difficult to "pose" and far more affected. She arrayed herself on the cushion placed for her, and



gazed with her bright eyes intently on a bit of biscuit held out ostentatiously behind the camera. There was a gentle motion in her tail, but this I firmly believe she was not conscious of, or she would have suppressed it. The result was surprising—I am looking at it now—sharp, clear, unblurred, and lifelike.

Thus our walks! The hotter, the more dusty the day, the longer the country road, the more welcome to Vixen the Second. Once the great green park was reached, with its eddying hills, its delightful slopes and swards, under the thorns, then supremest felicity set in; the race, the eating of grass, the tossing of the head, the fresh scamper, the drinking at the clear brook side, the book drawn out on the soft bank, with reader and book reflected in the brightest and most flashing of mirrors, while Vixen the Second is away on short explorings. Now a whirr from the root of the old tree that leans over the water, and the restless investigator has made out a nest; now a sudden splash and yelp of disappointment, and the nose is pointed quivering, as a great water rat leaps in, evicted from his lodgings.

Or, one might come suddenly on a stray party of boys with a donkey. There would be a tall fellow or two, who equally relished their share of the donkey, though scarcely to be ranked in the category of boys; one of whom, by superior force, was presently mounted, his feet almost touching the ground—then off they set full speed, voices chattering and screaming with delight, the dust in clouds, hoofs pattering, and a whole rain of pokes, thumps, pushes, pinches! Comic, and so it seems to Vixen, who, in a second, has her ears down, stoops, and is off at full speed. She gives low shrieks of enjoyment, and as the

clouds of dust clear, she is seen keeping up with the party, attaching herself to the heels of the donkey, giving him every now and again a short sharp bite. In a moment the donkey's back shoots up in the air, and Vixen, rolling over in the dust, is left behind; in a second moment she is up again, shrieking and yelping with enjoyment, and again has her sly bite below, but is more cautious in avoiding the return stroke. Up goes the back again, and suddenly there is a great scramble, and abrupt stillness, with a cloud of dust rising slowly. As it clears away afar off, I am toiling on behind, I see that the last uprising of the back (stimulated by Vixen) has been successful—that the lazy boy has been shot over the donkey's head—that one of his infantine aides has been upset in the confusion—that the donkey has been down himself as far as his knees, but is now standing like a stock or a rock in the centre of the disaster.

This faithful friend, and those who admired and respected her, were soon to be parted. It has been mentioned that she was of a delicate, finely strung nature, susceptible in the highest degree: skilful acquaintances, remarking the curious prominence and lustre of her wonderful eyes, prophesied in a highly encouraging way, "I shouldn't be at all surprised if that dog went mad one of these days." It came to pass that the family had to go and travel, and Vixen the Second was left behind, according to the newspaper phrase, "during a protracted sojourn." Special instructions were left that she should enjoy every luxury of diet, walkings, etc.; but, as was learned on return, nothing could a charm impart. Whether the matron in whose charge she was left, performed her trust conscientiously, it is not for me to say; her own rapturous declaration, that "if ever there

was an 'appy dog on this world's earth, it were her," seemed to be confuted by Vixen the Second's silent protest, and cowering away as the matron made advances. I had more reliance on that simple assurance of the honest creature who had never deceived. Vixen was in a tumult of joy to welcome us, and executed many strange and characteristic dances in testimony of her joy ; but otherwise she had grown dull and dejected. The matron (I heard later) had been fond of giving tea-parties, having a large circle of friends, and was therefore inclined to "drat that 'ere dog" or anything that interfered with her social pleasures. She had never treated Vixen the Second to any delicious country walks or green fields. However, we would now resume them on the old scale.

We went out "to shop" that very day, and, entering a bookseller's, Vixen went off as usual to explore corners behind the book boxes, unearthing bits of indiarubber lying in corners, and keep her nose in practice by finding traces of rats or cats. The shopman comes mysteriously, and says—

"Why, I think, sir, your dog is ill."

I follow him into a most retired corner, tremendously suggestive of rats, and there see poor Vixen the Second rolling contorted on the ground in a fit. *Think* she was ill !

It was a long struggle ; but the faithful creature, when encouraged and called to, made a wild effort to raise herself on her convulsed hinder legs, as she was accustomed to do to receive friendly approbation, but instantly fell back and rolled upon the ground. She got over it—walked home a little wild and confused, but still walked home. Next day we set off on a long, long walk, the first of the series, which should gradually restore her lusty health. It was a fine fresh day, and we

took a long stretch of miles along a sort of pier. Vixen was not full of alacrity—was rather heavy, with a curious suspiciousness in her manner, halting every now and again, and looking about her as if she expected danger. Still she exerted herself on every invitation to investigate holes for rats, etc., but her heart was not in the work. It was mere complaisance—the old wish to oblige and be agreeable. We walked until evening, then we turned. A butcher's boy passed, though without his insignia, but she knew him—the old instinct—and I own it was not with displeasure that I saw the sharp wiry ears go down, and Vixen make at his legs. He was some way in front, and she had some distance to rush. To my surprise, she quite passed her old enemy, pursuing her course as if, to use the butcher's expression, "a thousand devils were at her tail." The yellow figure grew smaller in the distance. I jumped on a wall and saw it growing yet smaller—still going on at the same frantic pace. Now she was a faint yellow speck; now she was a mile away, now out of sight. I never saw her again. A tragic exit—as it were rushing away into space.

A fishing village was between me and my home, where there was an idle, noisy, ne'er-do-well throng, ripe for any baiting or any mischief. I asked for her here, but they had seen nothing. Yet there was an odd manner about those desperados, as I recollected afterwards. When I got home, no Vixen's wiry head was put out of the study-door. Perhaps the poor honest creature had met a cruel end among these ruffians; perhaps she had felt her megrims coming on, and from the pain had rushed away, and these fellows had raised the cry of "Mad dog!" and had hunted the gentle creature to death. I have

another theory, quite consistent with her gentle temper, that she felt madness coming on her, and rushed off thus into the void and into space, severing all ties, in preference to doing involuntary injury to those she loved. But I have no warrant for this theory.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MY DOGS—TOBY.

I NOW come to the latest and best of my favourites—gone, I may say, but yesterday.

“Died, at his town residence, on December 21, Toby Turnspit, Esq., much regretted by a large circle of friends.” Something to this effect might be put in the obituary columns. Yes, Toby was gone; one more fine nature lost. I could have better spared a better dog. All the neighbours knew him, and will miss his familiar figure: a strange combination made by Nature in some freak, for, as in the case of the older dwarfs, a fine intelligent face and head were yoked with a kind of misshapen body. He was bow-legged even to deformity. Yet, to the last he thought himself as irresistible as his fellows, and would not admit, like the ugly Wilkes, that he was only a quarter of an hour behind the handsomest. When a group would stop in the street to converse for a few moments, were he passing he would join them without any restraint from his infirmity.

Toby's family was of foreign extraction, and originally came from Germany. An English lady and gentleman, who were travelling in that country, were attracted by the strange-looking pair, their

honest Teutonic manners and virtues, and induced them to come over to this country, where they were presently settled on the family estate. In due time a young family grew up about them, which exhibited, in very marked contrast to the natives of the district by which they were surrounded, all the peculiarities of their foreign origin. No stranger failed to remark the square build, the short, sturdy limb, the composed, thoughtful eye, the general air of gravity—so curiously opposed to the carelessness, and even frivolity, of the children of the soil about them. Gradually, however, as the offspring of the strangers grew up, they intermarried with the offspring of neighbours, and a sort of motley race was the result, though it was made a point of honour that some scions, at least, of the family should keep apart and maintain the purity of the old stock. To the ethnologist was thus suggested something akin to what is seen in certain parts of the kingdom, where are found descendants of old Danish or Dutch colonies, who are still to be distinguished by a certain grave reserve, and other physical signs, significant of their old ancestry.

Toby, one of these young sojourners in a foreign land, when playing carelessly by the roadside, had attracted the notice of some strangers, who fancied the young fellow's size and spirit, and conceived the idea that, with training and town diet, he could be made useful in a household. Many thus bring home favourite attendants from the Indies, and it must be said there is singularity in this whim. They may wish, perhaps, that those about them should be different to those about others. Such dependants, indeed, suggest the dwarfs and monsters who used to form part of a king's retinue. This, however, does not concern us here; nor,

indeed, the young Toby, who entered on his new service, and parted with the completest indifference from his aged father and mother. These, again, it must be said, showed no sign of feeling.

He accordingly came into residence, and excited curiosity as well as amusement, not so much from the singular mould in which Nature had formed him, as from the utter unconsciousness that there was anything about him that would not command respect, or, at least, not attract attention. His long black body, which had an eel-like sinuosity, was propped upon four of the shortest, squattest limbs that could be conceived off an alligator. They turned out exactly like the legs of those creatures, and the front ones followed exactly the outlines of a little lyre. Add to this his long snout-like head, with a lorn gaze and almost legal solemnity—for his ear hung and flapped about him like the full-dress wig of a Queen's Counsel—and it was not surprising that I at last came to have a shyness in taking him out for long walks, owing to the comments which his singular presence invited. For these, of course, his companion was not accountable, yet, unfairly, I was made to suffer for being in his company. His very fashion of fixing a sad contemplative gaze on those who insulted him, was in itself a challenge to renewed and more coarse remarks.

My departed friend had the sweetest and most unruffled disposition. What a fine nature he had! He was never in ill-humour, even in his last illness, which he bore with a fine patience. He allowed freedoms which others would not. You might take up and handle his poor twisted limbs, which many thoughtlessly did; he did not like it, but endured this ignorant ill-bred curiosity patiently; and it must be owned that within their

deformity they were beautifully formed, with fine lines. But, like most elderly gentlemen, he disliked—nay, loathed—the little low street boys. With such creatures anything eccentric or deformed becomes a subject for jeers, flouts, and gibes. No sooner did he appear round the corner than these imps would burst into a horse-laugh, and cries of “My high!” “There’s legs!” “Pair o’ tongs!” “Now, Old Splayfeet!” with other coarse speeches, which he bore with indifference, only going round—in vulgar phrase, giving them a wide berth. It was believed by the neighbours that some of these wretches threw stones at him. This sharpened and even soured his temper, and latterly, if he had reason to suspect one of these street pests, I have known him to rush at him and inflict chastisement, in anticipation as it were. The coarse scoff from the ignorant and vacant mind of the day labourer—who should have known better, though I hold him far lower in the scale than Toby—greeted him as he went by: “Law, there’s a dawg!” “He’s wore down his legs!” or “There’s legs!” “Look at ’is ’ead!” whereby it is to be noted that want of grammar and scurrility go together. He passed these critics, however, with the contempt of indifference. No doubt he was as content with, nay, as proud of, his legs, as Narcissus was of his. A hansom cabman, as our unoffending Toby was jogging his way home one day, out of pure malice made a cut at him with his long whip. I would I had seen the varlet! Since that day he always strangely crouched when one of these vehicles was passing.

What a sagacious, reserved fellow he was! He kept strangers at a distance; no amount of endearments, offers at patting, or “Poor fellows!” would persuade him to let the intruder’s hand get near

his chain-collar. He had profited by lessons of wisdom; he was eminently a wise dog; and thus saved himself from the dog "picker and stealer," or the "Dog's Home." In our district live many large dogs, collies and others, and I note it is a pleasant custom for the little newsboys and others, in their rounds, to take these canine acquaintances a short walk, the honest beasts taking care not to go too far. But our Toby resisted their advances; he would have nothing whatever to do with them. So he set his face, or snout, against the practice.

In a tolerably wide circle of friends I gave the late Toby a place, as a matter of course. In his way he was true, consistent, faithful as the best; far more even-tempered, good-natured, and grateful than the worst. A more worthy, sensible, generally amiable member of society did not exist; his long, dark, wise face, with the fine eyes, being always turned with a calm searching look to read your wishes. If we went by bark or hostile bearing, a more ferocious beast had never been shot by outraged keeper. There was high comedy for those in the secret, in the appalled look of children and matrons, as he drew near gaily with courteous purpose of being agreeable, and who greeted him with the offensive remark, "Odious brute!" He did not care nor did he cry, but wagged his switch-like tail. Certainly his appearance was alarming: a long rat-like trunk propped on his alligator-like—paws, we can hardly call them; they rather suggested the strange things that support the turtle.

He fluctuated between St. Giles and St. James: between the kitchen and the study. He liked company and detested solitude. Whenever the person whom convention calls his master rang at the door, eager pattering was heard, and our Toby,

stretched at full length before the genial blaze of the kitchen-fire, would give himself the rousing shake, and post up as if fearful of being late for his appointment. There was always something pleasant in his honest greeting, which was not fawning, but business-like and to the point; for, having come to the door, he would turn sharply aside into the study, where there was another fire, and where he would reside until his master went out, when he would again descend. This fluctuation gave an agreeable variety to his life. As the hours for the menial meals drew on, his bearing was marked by a restlessness, which increased, if the door was closed, to rather undignified demonstrations, piteous complaints, and even howls until the way was cleared, when he galloped below with the eagerness shown in a man-of-war when all hands are piped to the grog-tubs. In this only instance did he ever forget his native gravity; but when, like Justice Greedy in the play, there's a clapper in one's interior ringing clamorously for dinner, we are all the same. Yet with this unmistakable taste for good society, and with his declared regard for the person who owned him, it was mortifying to find that the person who really had his affection—idolatry almost—was one of low birth and associations: a footman, in short—exactly as in the case of Jack. This man's step he knew, his mode even of opening the gate; for in a second he was on his legs, his ears cocked, his nostrils scenting, straining even, to catch the certainty of what he suspected—that a walk was in hand, and he was baulked! Then came heart-broken yells of despair and pain, as though fire were raging round him—so agonizing, in short, that he had to be enlarged, and with an unerring scent would set off in pursuit, shrieking all the

way, to the amazement of bystanders, mistrustful whether they should raise the cry, "Mad dog!" The movements of this man, too, he followed when laying the table, or what is called "taking away," with an affectionate, reverential admiration, sometimes thumping his tail on the ground, as who should say, "How grandly he does it!" He was evidently the greatest being he knew. I was equally evidently, in his eyes, a well-meaning, respectable being, but without the force of character of the footman. He showed this view not indelicately, but still plainly enough. I had once or twice taken him a long walk in the rain, whence he returned drenched literally to the skin and rather footsore. From that day he registered an oath that he would not be so taken in again. Accordingly on a proposed walk the crafty fellow would come forth with a feigned alacrity, but without any of the hysteric yells with which he complimented the footman, and give a few complimentary ambles, as I found, to throw me off my guard. But a street or two away he was gone, and by making haste round the corner might be seen cantering home as if the—well, a boy were at his tail! Should you have been prompt enough to catch him almost in the fact, as he was decamping, his mode was to stand far out in the middle of the road, gazing with a well-assumed pretence of not knowing what was intended—something unreasonable, no doubt. If you made as though you would capture him, he retired to a safer place, when he turned again and expostulated. Only in a morning pre-breakfast walk would he condescend to go a portion of the road, say down Eccleston Square and the street—Gillingham, is it?—which tends to the Victoria Station. Out of the said Gillingham runs a sort of cross road which leads

towards the square yclept Warwick, and so, as the music-hall song has it, "the back-way round" home. Here he invariably turned off, and from custom this compromise had grown up and was honourably observed on both sides. He thus secured a variety of walk and a pleasant change. He had, indeed, stores of topographical knowledge, and, I believe, would have found his way back from any part of London on this side of Oxford Street. Once get him to Charing Cross, and he was all right. The Thames Embankment, too, was another landmark, and there, too, again he was all right.

Every one knew Toby. Men going to their work addressed him by name; and in the street which he passed through every morning on his short cut home he was regarded with as much surprise as interest—as, indeed, something mysterious. No doubt it was often speculated what on earth brought the black, long-backed, long-nosed, short-legged dog at that particular time, who did not dally (for he knew the boys), and was unattended. At the family butcher's, too, he was well known, and there his larcenous passions were connived at. Knowing, however, that the men of cleaverous tastes are quick to resentment, he never entered the shop boldly by the front, but crept in by the flank under the chopping-block, and so made the tour of the place, certain to secure, unobserved, something valuable. At one time he had a piece of horse-play, or dog-play, of humorously biting strangers' trousers, and where what was beneath went free, as sailors say, and was abundant, he didn't much care if his jaws closed upon that too. A claimant had to be soothed and indemnified for a torn trowser and scraped flesh by the moderate sum of half a sovereign. It was felt he should be cured of this expensive taste, and

cured he was by his friend the footman. But his affection, strange to say, became even more extravagant. Indeed, the footman's bearing to him was rather gruff, certainly indifferent, a kind of "don't bother me" air. But it was all one to his admirer.

Such, then, was Toby—Toby Turnspit—who departed full of years—ten, I think. He succumbed to the late frosts, from some bronchial attack, combined with a swelling in his head. To the last he proved himself the same amiable, respectable, and respected creature he had been all through, giving no trouble, lying coiled up in his hutch by the kitchen fire. Even a few hours before his death, he showed his sense of kind words, "Poor Toby!" "Poor old dog!" or friendly pat, by grateful wagging of his tail. He passed away in the night. As I said before, we could well have spared a better dog, and I am sure that there are residing in our neighbourhood human characters of not half his merit.

CHAPTER XIX.

AT THE MUSEUM READING-ROOM.

ONE of my favourite haunts, and also one of the genuine "sights" in the metropolis, and the one most certain to please and astonish strangers, is the great Reading Rotunda, devised by the clever Italian director whose bust looks down from over the entrance door. The visitor suddenly introduced can hardly conceal his wonder and gratification as he gazes round at the enormous chamber, so lofty, airy, and vast; so still, and yet so crowded; so comfortable and warm, like any

private library. The decoration, too, is most suitable: the books, which line it all round to a height of some forty or fifty feet, make excellent well-toned bits of colouring; while the ribs of the huge circular roof converging to a centre, and covered with painted cloth, have by time displayed their outlines on that material, and unintentionally added a not ineffective detail. In the centre is seen the raised circular enclosure, where the officials and directors sit and carry on the business of the room, commanding a good and perfect view of all that goes on; while from it radiate the desks, where readers or writers—for there are far more of the latter than of the former—sit and work. Many are walking about; many standing at the shelves and consulting the reference volumes; many are conversing; while the attendants are hurrying to and fro, carrying the ordered volumes to the proper desk. There are small waggons, laden with a dozen unwieldy volumes of the *Times*, which a truly hungry reader is trundling to his seat, yet without the least noise, for the wheels are cased with india-rubber. This rapacious individual is a type of a large class from whom the nation and readers suffer. The searching a single volume of his *Times* might absorb a morning or mornings, but, with the true rapaciousness of a *helluo librorum*, he wishes to have all at his hand, though he cannot use them. His fellow of the same kidney will write up for a dozen or more octavos, and rear around him whole fortifications of volumes which he will never glance at—but it is a sort of ownership for the time.

The reader's desk is almost too luxurious. Nothing more complete or thoughtfully devised could be conceived. There is a choice of three

kinds of chairs : stuffed leathern, cane-bottomed, or highly polished mahogany ; so the most *difficile* as to this nice matter may suit themselves. The constant student and diligent author should choose the second ; they will thank me for this valuable and precious hint, given by the late Mr. Dickens, and enforced solemnly from his own experience.

The height of the desk is carefully calculated. Below, there is a place for "stowing away" the hat ; in front, to the right, the reader lets down a small padded shelf, on which he can put away his books for consultation ; to the left, a book-stand comes out, ingeniously contrived to move in any direction on a swivel or axis, to rise or fall at any angle, with a rack. In the centre is an inkstand, with a steel pen and two quills ; there is also a paper-cutter, a blotting-pad, and a heavy press-weight to keep the book open. Surely this is all *de luxe*, and many a scribbling being is not nearly so well provided at home.

The ticket on which the description of the work wanted is written is of this pattern :—

Permission to use the Reading-Room will be withdrawn from any person who shall write or make marks on any part of a printed book, manuscript, or map belonging to the Museum.

Press Mark.	Name of Author, or other Heading of Work wanted.	Place.	Date.	Size.
	_____ Title. _____			

Date) _____ (Signature).

_____ (Number of the Reader's Seat).

Please to restore each Volume of the Catalogue to its place, as soon as done with.

On the other side are the following directions :—

"Readers are *particularly* required—1. Not to ask for more than *one work* on the same ticket. 2. To transcribe from the Catalogues all the particulars necessary for the identification of the Work wanted. 3. To write in a plain, clear hand, in order to avoid delay and mistakes. 4. To indicate in the proper place on each ticket the number of the seat occupied. 5. To bear in mind that no Books will be left at the seat indicated on the ticket unless the Reader who asks for them is there to receive them. 6. When any cause for complaint arises, to apply at once to the Superintendent of the Reading-Room. 7. Before leaving the Room, to return each Book, or set of Books, to an attendant at the centre counter, and obtain the corresponding ticket, the READER BEING RESPONSIBLE FOR THE BOOKS SO LONG AS THE TICKET REMAINS UNCANCELLED. 8. To replace on the shelves of the Reading-Room, as soon as done with, such Books of Reference as they may have had occasion to remove for the purpose of consultation. N.B.—Readers are not, under any circumstances, to take a Book, MS., or Map out of the Reading-Room."

These slips are used profusely and by wanton readers with the most reckless waste. The amount consumed in a day must be enormous. Numbers are wasted or torn up ; many are convenient for making notes on, and thus save the expense of paper. Many readers copy out a vast number of entries from the catalogues on these slips, which they mean to use at some future period. In short, the consumption of paper by the end of a year—and each slip is on paper of fine quality and nearly the size of half a sheet of

"note"—must be enormous and represent a considerable sum. It more or less encourages the useless, vacant reader, who delights in filling up as many as he can. A reform might certainly be made here, analogous to that in the Money Order Office, when the little simple slips now in use were substituted for the old complicated and larger ones. A small scrap of the size of such a Post Office form, leaving out the directions, which are never read, would make everything shorter and clearer. A piece of paper three inches by two, ruled in three divisions, would serve.

Press Mark.	
Name of Book, Date, etc.	
Name of Reader.	
Number of his Desk, Date, etc.	

Further, there are little handy book-cases standing apart, filled with reference indexes to reviews and magazines—with that wonderful one to the *Times*, which the industrious Samuel Palmer slaves at untiringly, working his way at double tides, backwards as well as forwards, through the old as well as through the current numbers. I have noticed this patient workman and his assistants at their drudging but useful work.

The next step is to consult the catalogue—a library in itself, whose folios are disposed on two deep shelves near the ground, and fitted into the circular enclosure or table which forms the central ring. Here is the whole alphabet, as found disposed in nearly six hundred MS. folio volumes,

bound in whole purple calf, and yet being perpetually re-bound, the corners being tipped with metal to protect them against wear and tear. But these wonderful volumes have a strange power of expanding, that must be the despair of the binders, save that they are well accustomed to the routine. Never was the system of guards so drawn upon; at almost every page these are found. At the close of each day one is sure to encounter assistants carrying off a number of the ponderous volumes for this revision; for by the end of each day a vast number of new titles have been written out in the neat museum round-hand, and duly lithographed on slips; and these have to be fitted in in their *proper* place, mark! that is, in their strict alphabetical hierarchy. Thus, for the new novel by Meddle there is but the one fitting place, say between Mecca and Meddlicott, which two titles, however, may be squeezed close together, and, as if in the crowded row of a pit, cannot "move down." A new sheet has therefore to be introduced and fitted to the guard, and the entries moved on. When the "guards" have been filled and the volume begins to bulge, it is taken to pieces and re-bound, or divided into two. By the new system of printed entries the space taken up is far less, and the necessity for shifting is much reduced. It should have been mentioned that all the titles of the new books as they come out are duly printed in volumes, which are placed in stands for reference; and the type being kept standing, these are used for the entries. But, indeed, catalogue arrangement is an art in itself, as can be seen from the Parliamentary report on the subject. No one can conceive the difficulties of classification, cross-references, etc. Another perplexing matter is to find a system of letters

and numbers for noting each volume, that should not be exhaustible nor too cumbrous.

A careful examination of the catalogue would of itself result in many curiosities. The authors rejoicing in the name of SMITH fill three or four of the folio volumes. The "*John* Smiths" fill many bewildering pages, which you must go through before finding your own John Smith; but even here our compilers give every shred that may distinguish, and they will mark him conspicuously as a divine, "D.D.," or even of "Stoke Pogis," if he have written a respectable number of volumes. A popular or classical writer fills half a volume, or innumerable pages, as the case may be. Thus with Sir Richard Steele, and particularly Boswell's Johnson, or Milton. England has a couple of volumes to itself, in which we find all the kings in their order, and all that concerns each. So with France. Periodical publications, "P. P." in the notation, have quite a catalogue of their own. All these and more are here found gathered together to the number of some twenty volumes or so. They are ordered alphabetically according to cities—Antwerp, Berlin, Calcutta, etc.; the Antwerp magazines and journals being again put alphabetically. To help those who know a magazine by its name but not its country, a general index in some fresh set of volumes is given. London, however, has a set of volumes to itself. Newspapers are not catalogued under numbers or letters, but it is enough to write the name of the paper wanted. Shakespeare, it may be conceived, has a large amount of space to himself, though, indeed, this is scarcely a mark of merit, as there are many industrious editors and bookmakers who stand this test even better. It was stated the other day in a literary journal, as evidence of

claims of this description, that the works of the late veteran novelist, Harrison Ainsworth, "filled forty pages of the Museum catalogue."

There is, besides, what is known as the "Old Museum Catalogue," in about fifty volumes; which is formed of a printed catalogue made more than half a century ago, and supplemented by MS. entries. There is some awkwardness in this double accommodation, as some works are enrolled in one which are not in the other. The entries are in old and indifferent penmanship, squeezed in at every space and corner; but in its day, like Mercutio's wound, it "served." It suggests the catalogue of the fine library at a certain university, where, by a strange economy, a Bodleian catalogue thus supplemented, and with due erasures and additions, is made to do duty as the authorized list.

There is also a wonderful music catalogue, extending to some thirty or forty folio volumes, and a marvellous so-called "catalogue" of the prints, which has now reached to four or five volumes, arranged chronologically. It is, in truth, an elaborate treatise, explaining fully the subject of every plate—often, as in the case of Hogarth, enigmatical enough—showing the meaning of each figure, and quoting from contemporary writers: a wonderful monument, in short, of patient industry. In addition, there are "Publishers' Circulars" for forty or fifty years back, and two big volumes of a "Newspaper Index." In this land of catalogues, we of course meet those of the "MSS." There are some half a dozen printed volumes, and some in MS. Of these the most curious are Mr. Cole's, an old antiquary of the last century, who in beautiful handwriting, black, clear as print, and upright, made diligent "collections," copying every curious inscription, letter, and bit of poetry, what

not. These he illustrated with rude but truly effective pen-and-ink sketches. For himself he drew up these wonderful indexes. His eyes and his industry must have been equally valuable to him. There is even a catalogue for the Persian MSS. In short, every help is provided.

The next operation is to obtain the book. In the room itself, on the shelves within helping reach, is disposed a very fine library, of a rather unique kind, for it consists of what may be called consultation books; everything that will furnish general information on any subject—such as law, medicine, languages, science, history. For each department there are the standard works on each, all brought together; all the Histories of England—Freeman, Green, Froude, Lingard, Hume, Walpole; all the Calendars of State Papers, Parliamentary Reports, etc. So with French and German. The collection of Encyclopædias, it may be conceived, is extraordinary, for here are all the foreign as well as English, to the great "Dictionary of Conversation;" Peerages without number; Directories, Almanacs of all the leading countries, journals like *Notes and Queries* and the *Gentleman's Magazine*, your true "bookmaker's" friends.

Having found his work, our reader fills up his ticket, leaves it in a little open basket with a number of others, whence it is presently carried off. It then goes on its travels, sometimes afar off, through vast chambers and corridors, up flights of stairs, iron and stone, perhaps for a quarter of a mile, for thus far the shelves ramble away: thence to return to the wedge-shaped enclosure in the great room, where the assistants copy the particulars into their books. When thus "controlled," the ticket is placed between the leaves, the assistant in the room takes it to the reader's desk, and brings

away the ticket to the central desk, where it is deposited in a little zinc compartment alphabetically labelled. The time consumed in this process should not be more than ten minutes or a quarter of an hour. Formerly half an hour and longer was the time a book had to be waited for; but the real cause of any delay is the waiting its turn, as there are so many to be served. When the reader has finished with his book, and would restore it, he goes to the desk, hands in his book, and receives back his ticket. Till this receipt is given, he is held accountable. The men within then check off their entries by the books, which are once more in their possession. Thus much for the catalogue.

The Museum reader is a special type. Certainly three-fourths are genuine workers—bookmakers, copyists. One is amazed at the hodman-like patience and diligence shown—especially in the wearisome duty of collating, carried on with an unflinching conscientiousness by some wizened Dryasdust, who comes week after week, and goes through the great folio line by line. There are fair “damozels,” who work like any copying-clerks, and whose appearance is antagonistic to their drudgery. They have a volume of old letters before them, which they copy out fair for some literary man who has cash and position. Then there are families of copyists—husband, wife, and daughter. As any one engaged in literary work well knows, that copying—on any serious scale—is a costly business, though it is reasonable for the executant; while the writing is beautifully neat and clear, it spreads out to an alarming extent. Copying, indeed, does not pay, save in the case of MSS. otherwise not procurable. The literary man even at his desk, with text-book from which he is

quoting, though it be a passage of only a dozen lines, will find it far cheaper to sacrifice the printed book, cut out the bit and paste it in, than to spend a quarter of an hour writing it out. I have known many literary men whose books are cut up in this fashion. The wise and knowing take care to purchase some damaged copy for the special purpose. Many, however, hold it profane to cut and slash a book in this style—holding that you are taking its life—there being but a certain number of that edition in the world.

Every year the crowd of readers increases, while the Reading-Room, in spite of rearrangement, remains pretty much the same after twenty years or so. When all the scholars of the new schools and universities are in full work, the pressure will become serious. Yet there never can be found any real remedy; and no room, of whatever size, could be found sufficient to hold the "readers of the nation." The theory, it seems to me, is a false one, that every reader in the kingdom is entitled to find luxurious accommodation, attendance, pen and ink, with books which he wears out in the reading as though they were his own. The utmost the State can do is to entertain the eye. That causes no wear and tear, and needs little accommodation. Pictures, museums, prints, statues, are all legitimate. These are manageable, and may be seen by thousands. But to supply servants to fetch and carry for hundreds, and to wait on them, hunt up for them, aid them in their researches, bind books for them—all this service, in the case of thousands of persons, must soon break down. We might as well have State workshops. The theory is therefore an unsound one; and if carried out, it is at least the right of the nation to limit it as it pleases.

It may choose to confer the favour on those who

have some claim to it, and, instead of a Reading-Room, make it a "Student's Room,"—that is, for those who have work or business to do: a matter that should be regularly guaranteed. Even in their case, there should be a limit to the large number of volumes that rapacity requires to have around it. This should not be tolerated, save for special cause shown. It might be urged that all novel and poetry readers might content themselves with what is found on the shelves of the room; but this would not serve the demand, there being only one or two copies kept. The reform should extend to the limitation of persons as well as to that of the use of books. As regards the latter, the serious objection lies in the physical exertion necessary in bringing great volumes, and collections of great volumes, to the reader's desk. The idea, indeed, is that the reader should go to the books, and not the books go to him; and the fact that great folios have to be borne on carriages many hundred yards away, and brought back again, must add seriously to the wear and tear. The first principle, therefore, is to limit this transport. As already pointed out, it seems ridiculous to find a small waggon laden with a dozen volumes of the *Times* rolling on its way to a reader's desk, all for the benefit of some attorney's clerk who is looking for a birth, death, or marriage. It is clear that the time and physical labour involved in this process is not what the nation should pay for. Here is the true principle—for all newspapers, magazines, reviews, and "P. P." generally, there should be one great room, to which those who wish to consult such works should be admitted, and there help themselves. It is astonishing what an amount of labour and attendance this would at once abridge. This, with the reform as to the number of books called for,

would lighten the labours of the attendants to an extraordinary degree. I fancy much aid could be gained by a development of the Consultation Library actually in the room. This could be vastly extended by taking in additional shelves, abolishing many of the technical works on medicine and such subjects, and adding others on general literature.

There are a few desks set apart, like compartments in a railway train, "for ladies only," and one of the standing jests of the place—perfectly supported, too, by experience—is that these are left solitary and untenanted. There are some curious contrasts: some ancient shrivelled dame, imprinting delicate pot-hooks and hangers on official paper, while a fair and fresh young creature is seen grappling earnestly and laboriously with some mouldy and illegible MS. There are strange old ladies to be seen, somewhat shrunk and withered, for whom the place seems to have an attraction that will be strong even to death. A more piteous sight still is the decayed "hack"—ill-fed, ill-kept, in a state of decay, and who has some little "job" with which to "keep body and soul together."

Now, I believe, books are seldom stolen; indeed, a Museum book is so ingeniously stamped on the title-page and on certain pages that it becomes worthless for other purposes, and cannot be offered for sale without certain detection. Every print in every volume is thus stamped—it may be conceived what a labour this must be, in these days of copious illustrations. Without this precaution, they would to a certainty be cut out.

The work of all this machinery is helped by the unwearied, never-flagging, never-failing courtesy of the officials—notably of Mr. R. Garnett and Mr.

Anderson—who aid with their knowledge the anxious, troublesome, and often unreasonable inquirers. There is a class of querulous beings who delight in convicting the establishment of deficiencies. Their joy is to discover that some book “is not in the library,” or, better still, “not to be found, or misdescribed, in the catalogue.” They go triumphantly to the chief official with their mare’s-nest, and wait calmly while he, with patience and good humour, sends for the proper volume, and, running his fingers down the entries, at last points to it, duly registered in its proper place. There is sometimes show of plausibility in the complaint, or in the positive declarations of the claimant “that he has had the book in his hand,” that “it is in every other library;” and the chiefs grow a little nervous. A long search has to be made: assistants are sent on exploring expeditions in many directions, and at last it is discovered that there is no such work, or that it is by another author or on another subject, and that the careless inquirer is, as usual, wrong!

From a long experience, it may be asserted that in almost every instance the presumptuous fault-finder is himself in fault. A common specimen of carelessness is presented in the filling-up of forms for works that are actually “in the room,” only a few yards away from the writer’s desk. Sometimes, indeed, a book may have been put back out of its place, or a pamphlet of a few leaves, bound up with a score of others in a volume—the volume itself one of many scores—may have been overlooked or wrongly described. But, after due search and some delay, it is to a certainty recovered and placed before the impatient student, who glances at it carelessly, and



finds it was not so important now that it is found. "So you see, sir," said, on an occasion of the kind, Dr. Johnson, "when it was lost, it was of immense consequence; and when found, it was no matter at all."

Such is the best specimen in the world of "Reading made easy;" by every kind of convenience and unbounded courtesy extended with prodigality even to the working literary man, as no one so well as the present writer can testify.

CHAPTER XX.

MODERN PRINTING.

WITH all the abundance of printing and printers in England, I confess even the more important handsome works, brought out by the great houses, do not satisfy the critical taste. There is something wrong and inartistic about the page and its arrangement. This is owing, I believe, to the wish to fit every work into one or two volumes, no matter what its size, which is done by using smaller type and closer lines. Now, this is as though architects were bound down to the same-sized façade for every house, no matter how many stories and rooms were required. The result of this treatment is a meanness and poverty in the look of the page. The treatment by the old printers was more artistic. If they had to crowd their page, they used a larger and more brilliant type, and brought the lines closer together, so as to avoid that open, straggling look which is now seen in many cases. Even in the great old folios, where each page contains a dozen small ones, all

is clear, brilliant, and handsome. English type also seems to be cut too fine; the impression is not black enough; and it must be said generally that printing is not nearly so good as it was fifty years ago, or at the beginning of the century.

This matter of the proportion of the size of the letter to the pages will be understood from the case of French binding, which is so superior; much of the harmonious effect, apart from the workmanship, being owing to the lettering on the back, and ornamentation nicely adjusted to the space, as though it were designed for the place. If we take any of the standard works—Macaulay's History and Essays, for instance—such as we see them in the regular libraries, we shall note this unsatisfactory treatment as we open the page. The printing seems faint and scattered, the paper thin, the title-page unimportant. It is quite different with the sober, substantial look of older volumes. Comparing these with the important French works issued by Plon and Dentu in large octavo, one is struck by the contrary qualities. These are truly handsome. Talking with the foreman of one of our most eminent printing-houses, a perfect factory, filling a whole street, and which was then engaged in bringing out an English version of a magnificent Bible, he spoke contemptuously, or, rather, with quite a superior air, of his French rivals. "Bless you, sir, we could beat 'em to nothing. This is child's play for us. We could send a dozen such through the machines in a month." I urged how beautiful, how delicate, was the printing, etc. He answered, "We don't want it. It's only wasting time. We give good, sound *English* work." The two quartos were accordingly produced, *clichés* of



the engravings, borders, etc., being used, the Protestant version in English substituted. Never was there such a contrast. That Bible, as is well known, is a matchless book, and, at this moment, fetches double the original price. It is regularly *designed*. Binding, size of page, type, paper—everything is in harmony. The full-page engravings, having a rich, old tapestry sort of detail, are not matched on the opposite page by a staring white expanse, and scattered open lines of printing—a harsh discordance; but an effect is aimed at. There is a mellow-blended tone. But when I saw our English copy, what a difference! A type large and open, clear enough certainly, was selected, thoroughly *English*; a bright, coarse, staring paper, instead of the elegant, *satiny* surface of the other; the whole honestly printed, and “run through the machine,” as our friend had boasted. It was painful to look at for a nice eye. As Lamb said of the modern editors of Burton’s “Anatomy,” “nothing more heartless” could be conceived. The French book, it is needless to say, was not “run through” the machine, though printed by it; each sheet being a careful special effort, done as delicately as possible. This instance I merely give as an illustration.

I have mentioned already how the strange charm of “getting your proofs” never palls, till the last hour. I have often seen (and been amused at) an eminent literary man presiding at his own table, guests about him, etc., much distracted by the arrival of the night’s post with proofs. He would look wistfully and eagerly, until at last, no longer to be restrained, he had opened and given the pages the fond, eager greeting of a father. I sympathized with him. The first glance at your own words and sentences,

before merely inchoate and imperfect (Charles Lamb says, "All things *look raw* to me in MS."), is a delight. You are pleased with your sentences. At the same time, it is to be owned that, once the book appears, you have not the same liking or enthusiasm. You hate your offspring after their formal birth, and could take a pen, go over and alter every sentence. This friend of mine was very nice and dainty about his proofs, and did not like to have them crushed and bundled in the post. When a book of his was printing, he always had a little portfolio, or cover, with strings, the inside of which had one direction, his own, the outside the printers'. Hence it passed backwards and forwards, and the sheets arrived flat and nice and comfortable.

In the same spirit I delight in, and reverence too, the great printing-offices, with their hurry and clatter, and the intelligent foreman who keeps all going so wonderfully. It is an exciting thing, when you are book-printing against time, to go in and see the process—the work perhaps not quite finished, the men hurrying up to you with rapid strides. In this case I was once told "*there were seventeen men on me!*"—forty feeding like one, busy as bees. It was something to see the pile of "copy" melting rapidly away every instant; the "click-click" of the setting of type heard close by; the men coming in for fresh "takes" every minute. It was rather a trying moment, during this crisis, when the word was passed that, on a second "casting-off," as it is called, or measurement, it was found that there was about two hundred pages too much. The matter was pressing, for the "seventeen" could not be checked a moment in their "onward wild career" without serious pecuniary loss, they being bound to their

work from the beginning to the end. One had to sit down on the instant and make the excisions boldly and firmly, though fluttered at having the very "folios" of "copy" taken away out of your hand. By an hour's desperate exertion I gained on my seventeen competitors, got away with the rest home—it was evening—under solemn pledge to have the "copy" back before the men came to work in the morning. But I had to work half the night. Yet that book, so hastily and unceremoniously despatched, gained enormously by these amputations. Within a fortnight of publication the whole edition was sold.

CHAPTER XXI.

OLD BOOKSELLERS AND THEIR HOBBIES.

THE refinements, hobbies, "fads," etc., connected with books are not one whit behind the manias for blue china, Queen Anne furniture, lace, and the rest. Paris is the place for these fancies, and a number of enterprising publishers are ceaselessly busy pouring out streams of hot-pressed, daintily printed little volumes, issued, like the proofs of a print, in stages or classes, and carefully numbered. Some are "pulled" on Chinese paper; some on "papier Whatman," which seems to be in high favour in France. These exquisite little works are pieces of art—the printing, the ink, the size of the type, everything being directed by artistic proportion. In short, these French works are almost perfect, and when bound artistically are worthy of a casket. Sometimes, in reprints of old works of the last century, the original plates of

etchings by Eisen, Marillier, and other "little masters," have been discovered, and are united to the modern text and paper with exquisite art. The prices, too, for these gems are extravagant to a degree, and the collector who would secure choice copies of *Manon Lescaut*, and the whole series of little romances, poems, etc., must have a long and deep purse indeed.

Another mania of the elegant collector is that of huge works, with etchings and other illustrations, such as *L'Art*, the *Gazette des Beaux Arts*; which, as they all admit of "stages" and "states," open up bibliomaniac gambling, gradual rise in price, and the rest of it. But it is certainly overdone, and no purse could keep pace with the overflowing supply. Here our neighbours are not only far ahead of us, but literally alone. Their wonderful fancy almost runs riot. Paris, it must

able result may be secured, for the principle is really good and genuine.

Let us take the case of so well known a work as Boswell's "Life of Johnson," which is a very suitable one for the purpose, and which the print-sellers are more often employed to thus adorn than any other. Its merit is, of course, the vast number of personages, living and dead, towns, countries, and events alluded to in it, and the inexhaustible variety offered of treatment. Let us follow the process.

The first step will be to secure, say, the large quarto edition in two volumes, which will be put into the hands of a professional person to inlay—that is, to insert each leaf in a large margin; a very nice and delicate process, done in a hot-press; the edges being first given "a feather-edge"—that is, fined down to about half their thickness, so that the joinings shall offer no "ridge." This converts the book into large, handsome volumes, so that prints of great size can be used. The first edition of the "Tour to the Hebrides" should be also secured and similarly treated. Next begins the hunt for prints, and not only for prints, but for play-bills, advertisements, old newspapers, autograph letters, water-colour drawings, and so on.

Johnson himself is of the chief importance, and portraits of him in every shape and size must and can be gathered together. The interest of this will be seen from the fact that each will represent him at a different period of his life, when young, middle-aged, old, etc.; these being judiciously distributed through the volumes at the proper eras. The same with Boswell. And as each print is dated, the whole arrangement has a sort of historical merit, and the comparison and progress

becomes highly interesting and curious. So with views of towns like Lichfield, which must be selected as they appeared at the date mentioned. There is mention of Mr. Green's museum in that town : and there are curious prints to be had of it. So with Temple Bar, and the heads stuck upon it, of which there are also prints. So with the old portions of London now pulled down, like Butcher's Row, near Temple Bar, where Johnson met his old friend Edwards ; the taverns in Fleet Street ; the King's Library, etc. Then the advertisement put out by Johnson of his school at Edial in the *Gentlemen's Magazine* must be hunted up and inlaid, as must be all these various prints, whatever their size ; the playbill for the very night of Mrs. Abington's benefit, when Johnson attended in state ; a copy of the catalogue of his books ; views of Drury Lane Theatre as it appeared then ; of Garrick as Archer in "The Beaux' Stratagem," and other characters alluded to in the work ; of the scenes at Ranelagh Gardens, at Vauxhall, and the Pantheon ; and thus will be gradually formed a perfect panorama of the manners, customs, and appearance of the various persons and the places they frequented. The portraits, indeed, if of fine execution, good mezzotints, or coloured in red chalk, like the old graceful Bartolozzi drawings, will be the chief adornment.

When all is tolerably complete, the book, now swollen to five or six times its original bulk, must be divided into portions, each portion becoming a volume. Next title-pages are specially printed, with Vol. I., Vol. II., etc., and the whole may be bound temporarily in boards, which will admit of further additions ; but it is generally handed over to Riviere, or some master, and sumptuously and stoutly bound. The effect of turning over the

pages is sometimes dazzling, and no modern illustrated book can compete with it. All these little loose prints and scraps that have floated down to us on the surface of the waters, escaping destruction so wonderfully, belong to their age, and are insignificant; but fixed in their place, and part of a collection, they become full of meaning. In the market such works, when directed by taste and labour, are worth great prices; and, indeed, there is a great and special value in them.

Works like "The Romance of the English Stage," with about one hundred poor magazine portraits of actors and actresses, bound up, we find priced in catalogues at from sixteen to twenty guineas; but the sums asked and given for really great works, chiefly by opulent Americans, are of vast amount. Not many years ago Mr. Harvey, the well-known collector in St. James's Street, received a commission from a gentleman to illustrate Boswell without limit of expense, with the result that it became stored with autograph letters of all the leading personages, original water-colour portraits, and proofs before letters; the sum given amounting to over two thousand pounds. Mr. Harvey, indeed, stands at the head of the professors of this system, and has brought it to the dignity of an art. He knows what choice things really are, and to pass his windows daily might be turned to profit, as a sort of education. Here one might at least learn what ignorance is shown in the sneers about "proofs" and different "states," but which really almost signify different prints, so totally opposite is a really brilliant impression to a poor one. Forster's "Goldsmith" has been similarly treated, as also Brayley's "London Theatres," Smith's "Book for a Rainy Day," Nolleken's "Life and Times."

It will be thought, perhaps, that this pastime will be beyond the reach of modest purses; but such is not the case. The present writer is now illustrating his Boswell, and has succeeded in getting together some four or five hundred interesting prints, all of the last century, at prices, on an average, from fourpence to a shilling. When complete probably twenty pounds will cover the whole. Of course, this does not represent outlay in the shape of time and knowledge, in exploring old portfolios and out-of-the-way bookstalls. In the curious old "wynds" of Bloomsbury, hard by to Red Lion Square, and also in Long Acre, and thereabouts, are little dark shops devoted to scraps and prints, and here you find professors of the art, strange, well-informed beings, who spend their days and nights "snipping" up and trimming old prints, and putting them away in boxes like those in a haberdasher's shop—each according to a subject; so that if you asked for "owls," a collection would be brought forward. I wot of one with whom I used to have many a talk on that subject, and who has the most wonderful collection of Cruikshank's engravings, which he cannot bring himself to part with. You enter and find him in his shirt-sleeves, busy "laying down" or snipping away. He knows your taste, and the subject on whose trail you are, and by each visit has secured and put aside a few "cur'osities." "I have got you," he will tell you, "the view of Johnson's house at Lichfield. Here is the set of three, of Vauxhall Gardens. Here is Garrick delivering the ode at the Stratford Jubilee," etc. In these boxes are treasures, choice mezzotints by M'Ardle and Smith, at choice prices; and yet at the very moderate sums of a shilling and half a crown some dainty little copperplates of Mrs. Abington and Mrs. Hartley.

There are legends in the business of some prodigious efforts in this direction. The most remarkable and gigantic was the copy of Pennant's "History of London," which was bequeathed to the British Museum by Mr. Crowle, and cost that gentleman seven thousand pounds ; and the "Illustrated Clarendon and Burnet," formed by the late Mr. Sutherland of Gower Street, and continued by his widow, who has munificently presented it to the Bodleian Library, cost upwards of twelve thousand pounds. This, perhaps the richest pictorial history which exists, or is likely to exist, deserves more than a passing notice. It contains nearly nineteen thousand prints and drawings. There are seven hundred and thirty-one portraits of Charles the First, five hundred and eighteen of Charles the Second, three hundred and fifty-two of Cromwell, two hundred and seventy-three of James the Second, and four hundred and twenty of William the Third. The collection fills sixty-seven large volumes. Forty years were spent in this pursuit. The catalogue of the illustrations, of which a few copies only were printed for distribution as presents by Mrs. Sutherland, fills two large quarto volumes. There are copies of Byron's works and Scott's works, each illustrated with many thousands of prints and drawings, each increasing almost daily.

"Granger"—a herculean task—has been several times attempted. The late Mr. Forster purchased a copy at a good price, extending to a vast number of volumes ; and, starting on this foundation continued to augment it till his death. It is now in the South Kensington Museum, to which he bequeathed it. A congenial writer has said *à propos* of this work—

"The system of which we now speak was not fully developed until the publication of Granger's 'Biographical History of England.' Something

and masses of these papers turn up at auctions or dealers'. The late Mr. "O." Smith, popularly known as a player of grim melodrama, was a more conspicuous instance of the system. He planned a history of the stage on a vast and ingenious system. This was to transcribe, collect chronologically, downwards, every fact and writing bearing on the subject, set them in order, and thus let the story unfold itself. This amazing work was carried out in thorough fashion. He began with the very earliest times, transcribing all the Acts of Parliament, Privy Council orders, incidents from early newspapers: as he came to the era of printing, rare pamphlets, broadsides, etc., came in in their proper places. As the stream swelled, the whole of Davies's "Life of Garrick," and Boaden's lives of Kemble and Siddons, formed a sort of trunk, on which were grafted all manner of illustrations, filling up what the authors had left vacant. Rare etchings and caricatures, like the one of Mrs. Abington as Scrub, and Mrs. Garrick by the late George Cruickshank, brightened up the more serious passages. This wonderful accumulation, which must have cost a vast amount of time, labour, and money, was elaborately mounted and bound into nearly forty quarto volumes, and now reposes in the British Museum. This worthy actor had gathered a good library of dramatic subjects, but it was, I believe, according to the usual fate of such things, promptly dispersed on his death. In the Museum also lies entombed the "collections" of Mr. F. Place, who had made copious MS. notes for a history of the drama. These fill two large closely written folios, but were never turned to profit. There they lie, brought together for the benefit of those whom it may concern, and many of whom will never acknowledge whence they obtained such useful aid.

But the most remarkable of these diligent collectors have yet to be noticed. His vast gatherings also lie entombed in the great mausoleum or Museum. This was Dr. Burney, Johnson's friend and admirer, himself one of the most agreeable, cultivated, and interesting men of his day, as indeed the father of "Fanny Burney" might be expected to be. He was a man of elegant tastes, and much *recherche* in society, though his daughter's Minerva Press style of celebrating him in three volumes has not added to his fame. Acquainted with Garrick, Johnson, and the leading players and musicians of his time, he cultivated the most elegant tastes with a well-studied history of music, for which he made collections abroad and at all the courts. His main idea was to gather materials for a history of the stage, which (like so many others), he seemed to conceive, should be based upon "cuttings" from old newspapers, bills, etc. The result of these labours is to be seen in the Museum in some forty or fifty volumes, into which have been pasted all these extracts. On these the well-known Geneste based his laborious chronicle of the drama, one of the most useful and general accurate works ever written. But a more interesting monument of Dr. Burney's labours is the large collection of portraits and illustrations relating to Garrick. These fine memorials are laid down in great folios, and are pleasant to look over.

It may be added here, that in the Garrick Club there is a collection of half a dozen enormous atlas-like volumes, presented by Sir C. Ibbetson to the Club. These are filled with grand mezzotints and engravings of English and foreign actors, either as individual portraits, or in scenes from plays. These are mostly in what is called "brilliant state," and give a truly noble and imposing idea

of the profession. The faces and attitudes are clear, full of intelligence and spirit; the execution fine, the situations dramatic, the tones rich. When we put the portraits and pictures of our day besides these three works of art, we at once see what a serious falling off there has been. Of Garrick alone there is a huge volumeful, and an equal space is devoted to the Kemble family. These favourite actors are shown under all conditions on the stage, in their home and gardens, surrounded by their families, or even glorified in apotheosis. The value of such a collection is enormous; one single one, Zoffany's, the scene from *Lord Ogleby* and from "*The Clandestine Marriage*," being priced by the dealers at from ten to twenty guineas, according to its "state." Formerly these portrait mezzotints could be "picked up" for four or five shillings; now the poorest fetch over a guinea. Standing in a shop recently, I noticed a pair of Turner proofs, "*The Shipwreck*" and another, which seemed brilliant enough; to a customer entering and demanding the cost, the reply, calmly given and as calmly accepted, was—seventy guineas!

Our grandfathers, in the days of dear newspapers, were fond of cutting "valuable extracts," full of useful information, which they pasted rather clumsily into volumes. These we sometimes find in old country houses, and smile as we turn over their somewhat antique and now exploded information. But in our times this has been brought into a system. There are many ladies who ply their large scissors every day; and for these special books with guards are fashioned for pasting into. One of them is filled up speedily. But it is extraordinary what a mass of curious and interesting information is to be

found in the daily papers—such as, recently, the opening of the St. Gothard Tunnel; the charming letters of Mr. Robinson on *cinque-cento* medals; the little controversies on pictures, old houses, etc. But it is a false system to think of grappling with and dragging to shore all such matter. Life becomes a drudgery, and the material accumulates in vast masses, impossible to deal with; every day the claims become larger and more importunate. The true and suitable course is simply to note and index such matter in a book, so that the files can be referred to. This is as much as can be attempted. I know of one gentleman who has carried on the opposite course for many years, cutting out, pasting in, and above all indexing, with the result that he has hundreds of such volumes, which he has probably not time to consult. Having contributed so much, he cannot draw back.

In connection with this matter, few will conceive how much outlay has to be incurred in writing an important work of, say, biography or history. Quantities of books have to be purchased, from which extracts have to be made. These must be either copied at so much expense of money or your own time (which is the same thing), or they must be cut out and the book is destroyed. Then MSS. and letters in the Museum must be copied—a serious outlay; there are extracts from rare books also to be copied; and, finally, papers and letters certain to turn up at auctions, and in the catalogues of old booksellers, must be secured. These last are a most costly item, letters of great writers fetching great prices, if they be what is called in the catalogue “fine” or “characteristic” specimens.

The late Mr. Forster, who was truly sumptuous

in his ideas, spared nothing in preparing to bring out a work. For his "Life of Swift" he had been accumulating papers for at least twenty years. These were of the most valuable kind. I fancy he secured whatever was offered on the subject — diaries, books of accounts, letters, original MSS. of works; so that the outlay was great, and would scarcely have been repaid by the return. A book like Croker's Johnson must have entailed enormous labour, as well as the collection of a vast amount of rare books: these there are booksellers who will undertake to find and who must be paid handsomely. In my own humble way the books for a certain biography have cost close on £100; but they will serve, I trust, for many other works of the kind.

But to return to some triumphs of that curious art, which can scarcely be carried further. In the following collections the subjects could scarcely be more glorified; and all that taste and expense could compass has been contributed. Mr. A. Harvey, some years ago, offered two volumes on Kemble and Garrick. Nothing better shows the position of the great actor, and the extraordinary interest he excites, than the amazing variety of these tributes to his fame. Mr. Boaden, in 1825, wrote two octavos describing his friend Kemble's life and career, in which there is certainly an intolerable quantity of Boaden to some shillingsworth of the actor. Now to see what can be made of this dry skeleton by taste and money.

"It is," says one enthusiastic *dilettante*, "rendered into a Matchless and Unique set of books by the addition of a splendid and interesting collection of Illustrative subjects of the highest class, arranged as follows:—Vol. I. contains one hundred and

five Portraits, including upwards of forty various Portraits of Kemble and Mrs. Kemble, and beautiful Drawings in Water-colours of Mrs. Kemble when Miss Hopkins, and Mr. and Mrs. Hopkins, her Father and Mother, and an original sketch of Kemble, and Autograph Letters of Kemble, Murphy, Mrs. Inchbald, Parsons, and Miss Pope. In Vol. II., seventy-three Portraits and Views, including an Original Unpublished Drawing in Water-colours of Kemble, and a beautiful Drawing in Water-colours by De Wilde of George Alexander Steevens, and Mrs. Wells; Autograph Letters of Emery, O'Keefe, Shield, Miles Peter Andrews, Madam Mara, Holcroft, and rare Autographs of Wilks, Booth, and Cibber, attached to an account for some article required for a play at Drury Lane. In Vol. III. are sixty-nine Portraits and Views, including a Unique impression of a beautiful portrait of Mrs. Siddons, and a Drawing of Mrs. Yates' monument, and Autograph Letters of Mrs. Siddons, F. Reynolds with a MS. Poem, Mrs. Billington, Michael Kelly, Charles Macklin, and Noverre. Vol. IV. has sixty-seven Portraits and Views, including the fine Drawings in Water-colours of Mrs. Siddons, and Knight, and Downton by De Wilde, and Autograph Letters of Harley, Mrs. Bland, Edwin, Munden, Miss De Camp, Mrs. Dickons, Mr. Harris of Covent Garden, G. Colman, sen., William Godwin, Elliston, and Downton. Vol. V. shows sixty-one Portraits and Views, including a Drawing of Charles Kemble, and Autograph Letters of Mrs. Glover, John Palmer (2) and a MS. address spoken for the benefit of his Widow and Children, Thomas Dibdin, Curious MS. verses written by James Hadfield on the death of his bird during his Confinement in Bethlehem Hospital for shooting at

George III. in Drury Lane Theatre, Blanchard, Peake, De Camp, J. W. Betterton, Mrs. C. Kemble, and Dimond. Vol. VI. has sixty-eight Portraits and Views, and Autograph Letters of Boaden, Miss Duncan, Macready, George Colman, jun., Incedon, and Mr. Whitbread, which concludes Boaden's 'Life of Kemble.' In Vol. VII. a 'Life of Kemble,' fifty-two pages 8vo; Poems addressed to Kemble; Anecdotes and Cuttings from old Magazines, etc.; an Authentic Narrative of Mr. Kemble's retirement from the Stage. 'Broad Hints on Retirement, an Ode to a Tragedy King,' addressed to J. P. Kemble, Esq., by a Theatrical Rebel, all illustrated with thirteen Rare and Curious Caricatures on Kemble, Mrs. Siddons, and Master Betty, and twenty-one fine Portraits and Tickets of admission to the Dinner. Vol. VIII. Sale Catalogue of Kemble's Library and Prints, with Prices and Names. An Authentic Statement of the Dreadful Conflagration of Covent Garden Theatre, September 20, 1808. 'The Theatrical House that Jack Built,' with numerous cuts, a Satire on Kemble. O. P.'s manual. A genuine Collection of O. P. songs. 'What—do—you—want?' explained in a Poetical Epistle from O. P. to All the Aitches. Account of the O. P. Dinner, etc. 'Reason *versus* Passion; or, an Impartial Review of the Dispute between the Public and the Proprietors of Covent Garden Theatre,' etc., the whole illustrated with rare Caricatures. Vol. IX., 'The Rebellion; or, All in the Wrong,' a serio-comic hurly-burly, etc. 'The Whole Proceedings on the Trial of an Action brought by Henry Clifford, Esq., against Mr. James Brandon;' with scarce Caricatures.

"The late Sir Charles Price was for many years engaged in collecting the Illustrations used for this work. Amongst the Portraits are many in choice

early proof states, and from the very limited number taken off, may now be considered almost Unique. The whole are choice picked impressions ; and, considering the rarity, beauty, and interest of the illustrations, it is almost impossible that another copy of equal interest and beauty can be reproduced. The Life, Pamphlets, Autographs, and Illustrations have all been very neatly inlaid, and very elegant and appropriate Title-pages have been printed expressly for this copy, which now forms nine volumes small folio, and is richly bound in red morocco extra, double bands inlaid with green, gilt edges, by Riviere." The price, not by any means the value, was £150, which was soon given by an American.

This same Boaden was entrusted with the editing of Garrick's vast mass of correspondence, of which only a tithe was published, in two ponderous quartos, a memoir being prefixed. Mr. Forster secured what were not thus used, which may be seen in his collection at Kensington, richly bound in russia—a long series of folios. These two quartos, taken in hand in the same fashion, were "rendered into a magnificent memorial, by the addition of a fine assemblage of nearly four hundred beautiful illustrative prints, comprising numerous rare mezzotints, and other engraved portraits, all fine impressions, many being choice proofs; interesting Views, including two very fine Water-colour Drawings by Samuel Ireland, a very large and desirable collection of Autograph Letters, scarce Tracts on Garrick, Cuttings from Newspapers of the period, etc.; the whole of the illustrations carefully arranged throughout the books, and all made of a uniform size by being very skilfully inlaid. New Title-pages have been printed expressly for this Collection, which is

now arranged in six vols. 4to, and splendidly bound by Riviere, in French green morocco, richly tooled broad borders of gold on the sides, gilt edges, £130."

Here is a succulent specimen. We seem to lap up the sentences. It invites a gastronome to be purchaser. "Profuse collection," "fine and rare mezzotints," are good terms and inviting.

"*Anecdotes, Observations, and Characters of Books and Men*,' collected from the Conversations of Mr. Pope, and other eminent persons of his time, by the Reverend Joseph Spence, edited with Notes and a Memoir of the Author by S. W. Singer; one volume folio, extended to three volumes, by a profuse collection of fine and rare mezzotint and other engraved portraits and autograph letters, divided as follows:—Vol. I. contains ninety-eight Portraits and Views, and a fine Drawing of Shenstone's portrait (engraved as a frontispiece to an edition of his works), and of Pope's Villa, and Twickenham Church, with Pope's Monument, etc., and Autograph Letters, signed, of Pope, very fine; Dr. Johnson, very fine; Bishop Warburton, Horace Walpole, MS. Verses addressed to Spencer, and Signatures to Documents of Sir Robert Walpole, Wm. Congreve the Dramatist, and Louis the Fourteenth. Vol. II., frontispiece, View of Pope's Villa, after J. M. W. Turner, by Pye, a splendid proof in the earliest state, before any letters, on India paper, very rare; seventy-eight Portraits and Autograph Letter of the Duke of Buckingham, addressed to Pope, also his Signature to a document; Dr. J. Wharton, Harley Earl of Oxford, the Earl of Peterborough, Eustace Budgell, and Signatures of George the Second when Prince of Wales, rare, also his Signature when King; the Marquis of Halifax, G. Stepney,

and Sir Wm. Turnbull, and Drawings of Milton's Monument, and portrait of Sir T. More. Vol. III., sixty-three Portraits, Autograph Letter of Lord Chancellor Cowper and Ralph Allen, and Signatures of the Duke of Newcastle, Duchess of Marlborough, Lord Godolphin, David Mallet, James the Second when Duke of York, Speaker Onslow; Colley Cibber, Wilks, and Booth, to a paper relating to Drury Lane Theatre, very rare; appropriate Title-pages printed for this copy, richly bound in red morocco extra, ornamented borders on sides, gilt edges, by Riviere."

The original work can be picked up for a few shillings, but by this system of rich dressing it reaches the figure of one hundred and sixty guineas. But what is this to a poor quarto by Hayley—the Della Cruscan—a "Life of George Romney," with portrait, a good copy of which can be had for five shillings? Under this cookery see what an appetizing dish it becomes:

"Romney (George), A magnificent and unique copy of Hayley's Life of this celebrated Artist, inlaid and bound in five volumes, folio size, twenty-six and a half inches by eighteen and a half inches, and illustrated with a splendid collection of Portraits, Views, and Autograph Letters, including about eighty subjects engraved after Romney's own Paintings, among which are a number of beautiful proof impressions of his exquisite Portraits of Lady Hamilton; Titles and an Index of Contents printed expressly for this copy. Richly bound in red morocco extra, gold borders on sides gilt edges, by Riviere." The price for this book in its new state is £350.

Or is not this more appetizing still?

"Thomson (James), 'The Seasons,' illustrated with beautiful engravings by Bartolozzi and Tom-

kins, from Pictures painted for the Work by W. Hamilton, R.A., one volume, large folio, 1796. Divided into Four Volumes, as follows: Vol. I., Spring, illustrated with fifty-three extra Engravings and two Drawings. Vol. II., Summer, illustrated with sixty-four extra Engravings and six Drawings. Vol. III., Autumn, illustrated with sixty-eight extra Engravings and one Drawing. Vol. IV., Winter, illustrated with thirty-seven extra Engravings and one Drawing. Making altogether two hundred and twenty-two extra Engravings and ten Drawings. The Engravings comprise a most charming and beautiful Collection of the choicest description of Subjects in Mezzotint, line-Engravings, and the Bartolozzi School, illustrating Occupations, Amusements, Sports, Pleasures, and other various attributes of the Seasons, ancient and modern, by and after Hollar, Goltzius, Watteau, Lancret, Boucher, Hearne, Hamilton, Constable, Collins, Bartolozzi, Wheatley, Gainsborough, Singleton, Woollett, Vivares, J. M. W. Turner, Landseer, etc., etc., and fine Etchings of Landscapes by Waterloo and Strutt, all brilliant impressions, many being choice proofs before letters. Among the Drawings is a very fine one in water-colours by R. Hills, Sir W. C. Ross, etc., and two very fine ones in Indian Ink, by John Marten; the whole forming a most delightful collection of subjects, illustrative of this charming descriptive poem. The four volumes are splendidly bound in green morocco extra, the sides beautifully ornamented and lined with cream-coloured paper, with rich gold borders, gilt edges, by Riviere, rendering this one of the most sumptuous and magnificent copies ever offered for sale, £240."

Such are the costly enjoyments of the opulent *literati*.

I have before me now the figure of yet another of my booksellers, who lived in a little den of second-hand books, under a sort of half light which fell upon his yellow face, shaded with the blue of rare or imperfect shaving. As you passed, you always saw him behind his half desk, half counter, bent down writing. He knew little of the antiquarian side of bookselling, but bought and sold old school-books; and transactions of this kind were always going on, some serving-maid or urchin coming in with a Latin Grammar or Colenso's Arithmetic, which he would turn over with an assumed contempt—part of his trade—then, as out of favour to the vendor, would consent to treat. Invariably a loud hem preceded some very low offer, as invariably accepted. That hem came of nervousness; for he was a conscientious man, and did not relish what is called beating down. He had been a country schoolmaster, was wonderfully well read, and collected vast stores of what is called "folklore," which he narrated in clear, effective English. His books are, indeed, authorities on the subject, and attracted much attention when they appeared. There was a simplicity about his style and manner that recalled Goldsmith, and I well remember a remarkable passage in one of his quaint letters, written from the country to Town, where he had never been: "I can picture you now," he said, "seated at your desk, writing; or possibly you *may be walking, book in hand, under the broad shady trees of Trafalgar Square.*"

There is something almost pathetic in the case of the patient, never-flagging book-lover and book-delver, who day after day and year after year plods on, reads and indexes, and cuts and catalogues, and pastes and stores away, all from the

pure love of his occupation, even till he grows old and feeble and (worse to him) his well-worn eyes begin to fail. The zest, the enjoyment he takes in his monotonous task never weakens. And yet, in his case, there is not, as in other instances, the ultimate crown of publication, print and proofs, to make a pleasant termination to his labours. These things we have read of, and there are pleasant romances founded on the work of the unrecognized "hodmen." But they live and pursue their task among us. The "old booksellers" can name many such, whose honest enthusiasm and faith carries them on.

Some years ago, I was busy editing an English classic in three volumes, and this becoming known in the usual way, I received a letter from a gentleman living in the outskirts of London, saying that he also had been considering the subject, and that his marginal notes, etc., were at my service. There presently arrived two quartos thus copiously annotated. It must be said that these remarks were rather criticisms and opinions than contributions of fact, and were therefore of little help for my purpose. However, after perusing them they were duly returned. Unfortunately, by an error in direction or from some other cause, the volumes were lost, literally through a miscarriage. He bore this with wonderful good-nature. After the first disappointment, I went to see him at his modest residence, and found him living alone. But then was revealed to me for the first time what one of these conscientious hard-workers really was. Almost at once he dismissed the misfortune that had brought me, owing to his roused enthusiasm at having a sympathizer to whom he could display his cherished labours.

Such labours! The house seemed to be turned

to a sort of factory. Books were piled up on the floor; cardboard boxes, such as are seen in millinery shops, were ranged all round. These held the "collections," which grew and grew by the labours of each day. These collections were on all subjects, most of which I have forgotten. One enormous and steadily growing one was on "Cookery"—the cookery of all ages and nations—a vast subject, as may be conceived. Another, of a more interesting kind, was a collection of all the foreign phrases in familiar use in the English language. His system was this. He received every newspaper and carefully read them, marking every phrase or word of this kind. A secretary came for a number of hours, who cut out and catalogued all that was marked. It was the same with his reading of books—all was marked, cut out, or copied, and distributed among the various collections. This gentleman was, I believe, a man of fortune. What became of his collections I know not, though I remember hearing that they were bequeathed to one of the universities.

Not very long ago, repairing to one of my favourite "old booksellers," who lives not a hundred miles from the Muscum, and asking him "had he anything in my way"—a favourite question (for there are what may be called "curios" in literature as in art)—he produced to me five ponderous folios well bound and lettered. These were filled with close and legible writing, were duly indexed, paged, had prefaces addressed "to the reader"—were, in fact, almost ready for the press. One appropriately dealt with a subject on which I was then completing a work. I at once accepted them at the modest price named—three guineas, and they were sent home. On examination they offered a truly melancholy record of

enormous labour and hope deferred ; for they had been offered to publishers and declined, which was to be seen from a forgotten letter or two left in the volumes. They were the fruit, literally, of twenty or thirty years' work. The laborious compiler had died, so I fancy, and his darling MSS. "sold for a song." They consisted of—

"BOOKS AND THEIR BELONGINGS," which dealt with everything that could be connected with a book, "embracing," as the author said, "the earliest accounts of alphabets, bibliography, book-binding, censors, copyright, dates, dedications, electrographs, errata, fates of books, gold-printing, illuminations, indexes, logography, MSS., missals, numerals, opisthography, quaint titles, paper, punctuation, publishing, scarce books, scribes, typography, text writers, xylography, watermarks, writing."

Next we had "AUTHORS AND ALL ABOUT THEM:" their births, marriages, deaths ; their calamities, conversation, carelessness ; their precosity, peculiarities, punishments, etc. "Authors. —Antipathies of Authors—Authors at fault—Authors and Dedications—Authors and Echoes—Authors of Remarkable Books—Authors rejected by Publishers—Authors and Critics—Authors, Correctors of the Press—Authors who did not 'write' their Works—Authors' Curious Title-pages—Authors' singular Motto Titles—Allusive Names of some Authors—Authors' Castigators—Authors who were Early Risers—Absurdities of Authors—Authors by Profession—Authors devoted to Literature—Authors with an Alias—Authors who ruined their Booksellers—Authors, Past and Present—Authors upon Authors—Authors' Rejected MSS.—Authors' Dislike of their own Language—Adulation of Authors—Anachronisms of Authors—Antimatrimonial Authors—Bulls of Authors—

Birthplaces of Authors—Blunders of Authors—Burial - places of Authors—Bookstall - hunting Authors—Calamities of Authors—Conversation of Authors—Contraries in Authors—Carelessness of Authors—Deaths of Authors—Dream-inspired Authors—Difficulties of Authors to get before the Public—Diligence of Authors—Diet of Authors—Dress of Authors—Dispositions of Authors—Deathbeds of Authors—Favourite Books of Authors—Families of Authors—Freaks of Authors—Foolish Authors—Friendship of Authors—Generosity of Authors—Grub Street Authors—Habits and Toils of Authors—Honours to Authors—Imitations and similarities of Authors—‘Imposing’ Authors—Imprisoned Authors—Late Learning of Authors—Lingual Attainments of Authors—Literary Fertility of Authors—Literary Despatch of Authors—Literary Residences of Authors—Longevity of Authors—Literary Pseudonyms of Authors—Last Days of Authors—Modern Authors upon the Old—Modest Authors—Memories of Authors—Manuscripts of Authors—Monkish Authors—Mean Origins of some Authors—Mottoes on Title-pages—Night-working Authors—Negro Authors—Names assumed by Authors—Old Age of Authors—Old Authors criticised by Modern Ones—Origins of some Authors—Origins of some Authors’ Works—Punctiliousness of Authors—Peculiarities of Authors—Punishments of Authors—Precocity of Authors—Payments to Authors—Prolific Authors—Private-Press Authors—Plagiaries of Authors—Pious Old Authors—Quaint Book Title—Rewards of the Old Authors—Relics of Authors—Remarkable Books—Royal Authors—Remuneration of Authors—Rare Prices of some Authors’ Works—Singular Method of Study—Sepulchres of Authors—Schools and Colleges of Authors—Social Characteristics of

Authors—Taverns and Clubs frequented by Authors—Unhappy Marriages of Authors—Whimsical Authors."

Next came the "THEATRICAL HANDBOOK," being a budget of collectanea, concerning plays, players, and playhouses, from the first dramatic performances 2460 years since, to the era of Queen Victoria. Here were detailed accounts of every playhouse, the first English female actress, the earnings of actors, Joe Miller, etc.; indexes filling many crowded folio pages. The book at this moment might be sent to press. At the same time, it is filled with extracts and cuttings yet unplaced, showing that the author was carrying on his work. "Books and their Belongings" had this

"PREFACE.

"'As little bees from every place bring home that which is profitable; so a student doth except from every author that which suits his purpose.'—Wits' Academy, 1635.

"'A Book which assembles Facts from all their scattered sources may be considered as a useful and important auxiliary of Wisdom.'—Sir Rd. Philips.

"After the reader has conned the Title-page it is perhaps hardly required of the author to say anything in explanation of a publication of this nature, because, as Butler has said, 'there is a kind of Physiognomy in the Titles of Books no less than in the faces of men, by which a skilful observer will as well know what to expect from one as the other.' . . .

"The author has therefore wandered from the diurnal to the dictionary; and, not seldom, a short paragraph only has been his reward, after literally hunting through numerous folios, plunging into cyclopædias, exploring newspapers, searching magazines, ransacking prefaces, dipping into introductions. . . .

"In every instance recourse has been had to the best accredited sources of information, which (as just suggested) have been so numerous that it is conceived better, with the limited space, to omit the formal enumeration of the authorities consulted. Consequently the writer is enabled to furnish his readers with the very diagnosis of a Book, its outside and its inside, with the history of each particular—of paper, ink, type, binding—when each 'stop' was introduced and by whom—'Colophons, Title-pages, Figures, Letters, Dates,'—as also what were the precursors of books; who were the first writers of books, first readers of books, first printers of books, first sellers of books, and together such a store of other minutiae as only the yearning bibliomaniac would crave after. As for the numerous and varied styles of Engravings, Prints, Book Illustrations, etc., space is better saved by simply referring to the 'Summary.'"

Though Mr. Irving's success does not date farther back than a few years, the amount of illustration he has been the cause of is scarcely credible. A friend and admirer of his, following the example of Dr. Burney in reference to Garrick, I have for some time past set myself to the pleasant but somewhat onerous duty of collecting these various trophies of popularity, and, without actually overtaking the artist, have just paused in my labours to survey the result. Five great handsome folios, duly bound, lettered, with title-pages printed, form this illuminated and illustrated record. They contain pictures of every kind and from every source—from illustrated papers, magazines, etc. There are scenes from plays, playbills, *menus* of the dinners, etc., given by the artist, paragraphs in abundance, with a host of criticisms, articles by the actor himself, etc. In short, these extraordinary volumes

contain everything about him. There are verses in praise and satirical; there are pamphlets—and there have been a large number issued—there are articles from *Blackwood*, *Macmillan*, and innumerable other sources. Even the yacht in which he took his excursion, and his “dog,” have been engraved. As an instance of this abundance of adornment, the pictures, some of large size, that illustrated the “Merchant of Venice” amount to nearly thirty; those of the “Corsican Brothers” to over forty. There are some forty or fifty portraits—nearly two hundred scenes from plays; then come speeches, letters, etc. The criticisms are by such leading critics as Clement Scott, Kendall, Tom Taylor, Knight, Moy Thomas, Purnell, Martin, Savile Clarke, Burnand, Wedmore, Morris, Labouchere, Dutton Cook, and many more. There are innumerable “leaders” from newspapers. There are, of course, abundance of caricatures; but the successful shuttlecock is always struck from both ends. Many of these are rather good-humoured, with travesties of scenes from the plays. Two artists, Bryan and Furniss, are singularly successful in giving the actor’s marked outlines, and seem to have made a study of him. One is responsible for hundreds of small sketches, some no bigger than a threepenny piece. Yet these four massive folios represent but seven or eight years of the actor’s life, and the collector is already in a state of embarrassment as to his future course.



CHAPTER XXII.

OLD CATALOGUES.

THERE is something piquant in the looking at the first obscure edition of a celebrated author's works, such as Byron's "Hours of Idleness," printed at Newark (though it is not scarce). Books printed early in the century, or at the end of the last, have a quaint air, and some are pretty copies. Books of poems, etc., printed about sixty years ago, are often pretty little volumes, such as the early editions of Lamb. How precious Tennyson's early works have become will be seen from the following :—

"Tennyson (Alfred) Poems by Two Brothers, 12mo, LARGE PAPER, UNCUT, boards as issued, £10 10s. 1827. Poems by Alfred Tennyson, 12mo, uncut boards as issued, £14. 1833. Poems, 2 vols. 12mo, uncut boards, 6s. 6d. 1842."

Their merits rise in growing capitals—"large paper," "boards as issued," "UNCUT!" This fancy for what is "uncut" is not unreasonable, as it, of course, allows of binding with a larger margin.

Here is Milton's "Paradise Lost," the first quarto edition, "very fine copy in morocco, super extra, gilt edges, dated 1667, and published by Peter Parker." Many are likely enough to have "picked up" what they fancy to be a first edition: but let them not so hug themselves. This should contain the very rare first title, in the first state. "A copy from the library of G. C. Way, the antiquary, vastly inferior in condition to the above, sold by auction, in July last, for £22 10s. Copies are often described as being 'first editions,' and

marked at apparently low prices, which, upon inspection, prove to have the second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, or eighth title-pages."

A curiosity must be the "First book printed on paper made from straw, published in 1800, an historical account of the substances which have been used to describe events and to convey ideas from the earliest date to the Invention of Paper; by Matthias Koops, royal 8vo, red morocco, gilt edges. £1 16s."

What a rarity, and an interesting one too, must be a little book printed at the "Frogmore Lodge Press. Miscellaneous Poems printed by E. Harding for Her Majesty Queen Charlotte to give to her select friends, only thirty copies printed, small 4to, mottled calf, gilt edges, by Bedford. £4 4s. 1812. With a MS. note of Harding the printer inserted."

Here are two little 12mo volumes, of not very brilliant-looking type and paper, but neat, yet marked £15!—the first edition of our old friend Goldsmith's "Vicar." All Goldsmith's early editions ("The Traveller" and "Deserted Village" appeared as quartos) fetch large prices; though lately, turning over a book box, I came on a little collection of "Poems for Young Ladies" selected by the amiable doctor, secured to me for 6d.

Few people have an idea what magnificent, sumptuous books are royal or "elephant" folios, in rich mellow old binding, the paper edges thick, bent, and waving, the gilding the colour of old gold. These noble tomes ripen with age. To this class belong those superb works describing coronations, processions, and other festivals which it was the fashion thus to celebrate. There was usually an elaborate, finely engraved portrait, with a noble title-page, the letters thick and substantial,



and a flamboyant coat of arms with boys, Cupids, etc., fluttering round. Then followed some thirty or forty plates, showing the procession entering the cathedral or palace, and all done with a minute care, as though by "ocular admeasurement," as Lamb said of the picture of the ark. The sides of such volumes generally have some royal device emblazoned, or it may be those of a cardinal—always an effective decoration. The days of quartos and folios are gone by, but it is impossible not to look at quartos with respect. They set off the binding. Folios are too unwieldy. They burst their joints by their own weight. Fine old quartos of Gibbon, Addison, Walpole, Racine, La Fontaine, turn up regularly at sales, the latter set off by beautiful engravings, and can be had at moderate prices. But there is an illustrated folio La Fontaine which brings a great price. I once secured a noble Gibbon, whole russia, "tooled," gilt edged, but broken, as it is called, at the joints, six volumes—"armfuls"—for a few shillings.

Huge works on foreign theatres are plentiful, and I own to a fancy for gathering them. All the great theatres of Europe have been thus celebrated, Scala, San Carlo, Bordeaux, etc. That of Bordeaux is worthy of the subject—perhaps the finest monument of the kind existing. It gives beautiful copper-plate engravings, done in a large flowing style, of every side—of the exterior and interior, with plans, sections, etc., of the most elaborate kind, so that the whole could be rebuilt at once. There is a pleasant effect of spaciousness in turning over these great sheets, next perhaps to that of contemplating the original.

One of the most beautiful, tempting books ever seen was an early edition of Chaucer, circa 1480, printed in black letter on a yellowish satiny paper,

and which had been bound carefully and soberly about thirty years ago. There was no incompatibility between the old body within and the new coat. It lay open with the weight, and there was a harmony in the tones and arrangement of the type that must have struck an unprofessional. A country clergyman had greedily secured this for, I think, four pounds. I am told there are such ardent, eager purchasers, that when a rarity is announced in catalogues, they arrive betimes at eight o'clock, before the shop is opened, so as to be first! A Caxton is, of course, not to be secured, save at a very high figure; but it will be seen that the amateur can secure a specimen of what is about as rare, at a not excessive price. Thus, "*Wynkyn de Worde. 'Gradus Comparationum cum verbis anomalis simul et eorum composituso.'* 4to, black letter, morocco. £8 8s. Imprinted at London by Wynkyn de Worde in Flete Strete, at the sygne of the Sonne (1527). Consists of eight leaves in remarkably fine state; unusually the case this Latin accidence is chiefly written in English. Caxton's device is on the last page."

How courteously, and with what smacking of lips, our bookseller speaks of the following treasures:—"Grained red morocco extra, full gilt back, gilt edges, by J. Clarke, £20. Argent, Johannes Mentelinus, circa 1466. A singular magnificent specimen of early printing, and of such extreme rarity, that it does not appear to have been known either to Panzer, Santander, De Bure, and other Bibliographers. Humphrey, in his '*History of Printing*,' has described Mentelin as one of the secret workmen of Guttenberg, and his types bear a resemblance to those used by Guttenberg, and that Mentelin was the real inventor of the art, and that Strasburg was the

original seat of the invention, and describes Guttenberg as the robber of his priceless secret. The above edition is, however, of equal, if not of greater, rarity than the one printed by Guttenberg, which recently sold for upwards of £400 : see printed cutting inserted, where a copy is priced £200."

And again: "'Plotini Opera Omnia,' 2 vols. folio, *editio princeps*, very fine copy on large paper, in rich old red morocco, full gilt back, gilt edges, by Derome, most beautiful state, £8 18s. 6d. Florentiæ, A. Miscominus, 1492. These splendid volumes have graced the shelves of the La Valliere, Gaignat, and Roxburghe Libraries. See Dibdin's glowing description as regards the beauty and rarity of the edition : he devotes three whole pages to it, and says that the noble owner has great reason to class it among the most precious rarities of his collection. MacCarthy's copy sold for 1020 francs, Sir M. Sykes's, £48, and the present in the Roxburghe sale for £52 10s."

Another treasure or curiosity would surely be this work : "'Henry VII. Necessary Doctrine and Erudition for any Christen Man, sette forth by the Kynges Majeste of England,' thick 12mo, with many large and rude woodcuts, large sound copy, in old half calf, of the greatest rarity, £4 18s. John Mayler, 1543. The only copies of this most rare volume known to Lowndes were the one sold at Sotheby's in 1826, and the one in the Lambeth Library. There is none in the British Museum or Bodleian Libraries ; it is the only edition with woodcuts, and the one that was sold at Sotheby's was priced by Thorpe, the bookseller, ten guineas." And above all, a treasure of amusement, for its strange, quaint illustrations, is the celebrated picture-book of the fifteenth century, the "Nuremberg Chronicle : " "Splendid old

woodcuts. 'Chronicon Nurembergense (Auctore Hartmanno Schedel) cum Registro,' the Great Picture-Book of the Middle Ages, illustrated with an immense number of very spirited woodcuts (several very large) by M. Wolgemut (the master of Albert Durer) and W. Pleydenwurff. A very large, complete, and fine copy, with capitals beautifully illuminated in colours and all the blank leaves, in the original oak boards, rare, Nurembergæ, A. Koberger, 1493. £25. Folio. From Dunn-Gardner's Collection, and probably the Tallest and Finest Copy in existence, after Lord Spencer's. In 1873 a copy measuring eighteen by twelve and a half inches was sold for £25, as the finest then known; but the present one measures nearly eighteen and a half by twelve and a half inches on the paper only, while along the boards it is nineteen and one-eighth by thirteen inches, and above three and a half inches thick (!) This is the grandest specimen of Koberger's celebrated Press, and every year is more sought after. Mr. Dunn-Gardner, among other interesting information, pencils inside: 'On the cover of a copy sold 3rd March, 1879, was written, "Sir Paul Methuen paid £79 for this book;" and on the title was the autograph, "Ad. Wright, pret. £16 10s., A. Dom. 1580"'—a very large sum at that time, which shows its estimation. This copy contains the addition 'De Sarmacia,' ten pages, with large engravings at end, and on fly leaf a legible long MS. dated 1577. Dibden remarks, 'Let me entreat you always to pay marks of respect to the productions of the First Printer at Nuremberg, Anthony Koberger. His ample margins betray a thoroughly well-cultivated taste.'

One of the dandy fancies of letters is the following:—"Books Printed on Vellum. Dufresny,

'Œuvres Choiesies,' 2 vols. post 8vo, uncut, French boards, only nine copies printed on vellum, beautiful specimen. £6 6s. Paris, 1810. 'Les Provinciales,' par Pascal, 2 vols. 8vo, only one copy printed on vellum, Renouard's copy, morocco, edges uncut, each volume in a case. £12 12s. Paris, Renouard, 1803. Saurin, 'Œuvres, Comédies, Tragédies and Poesies,' post 8vo, beautifully printed upon pure vellum, only two copies so printed, uncut. £3 3s. Paris, Didot, 1812."

But this suggests the famous Sunderland, or Blenheim Library, now in course of dispersing, and abounding in these treasures of copies in vellum. Large paper copies—that is, printed with extra-sized margins, an octavo page being displayed on a quarto page—are not now in fashion, and the cost is serious; for the form or the sheet of, say, sixteen pages has to be taken to pieces and widened out, and this, on a hundred sheets, comes to a great deal.

We have spoken of the Stowe Granger; yet finally, by the inevitable, inexorable law, the Rev. Granger himself was "dispersed," and the first portion of the collection of the Rev. James Granger sold off during six days' auction—"of great interest," we are told, "to the historical student, as it constitutes a kind of Biographical Dictionary of the period of William I. to James II. inclusive."

But, as a matter of course, there were not wanting persons to make collections of these very lists of collections, and accordingly we find catalogues described and sold *in* catalogues: "Catalogues (Sale) of nearly all the Great Libraries that have been sold for the last hundred and fifty Years, bound in thirty-one vols., 8vo, some thick, many with Prices the Books sold for, bound in half calf and other bindings. £2 18s. 1736, etc.

A most valuable collection ; includes some of the earliest Sales of Books by Auction. They were collected by a celebrated Bibliographer (Mr. John Bryant, part editor of the *New Lowndes*, and compiler of the celebrated *Daniels Catalogue*)."

Catalogues of great sales are often found to be priced throughout. These, as may be conceived, are of great interest and value, as the editions are generally described with great accuracy. Some are, indeed, pleasant reading, such as that of Strawberry Hill, Stowe, and others. It is extraordinary what collections can be made of a single department—"Block-books," Bibles, and a very favourite one, that of editions of Horace, which would need a library in itself. Of Bibles the late Duke of Sussex was a great collector, his sale occupying sixty-one days, and the catalogue filling six volumes small quarto! The famous sales and catalogues are well known. The *Libri Perkins*, Sir M. Sykes: "*Sykes (Sir M. M.), Splendid and Curious Library, Manuscripts on Vellum, Large Paper Books, Tracts, Early Poetry and Printing, of the most excessive rarity. Three Parts, complete set, twenty-five days' sale, Prices and Names. Roy. 8vo, calf neat. £1 1s. 1824.*" Dr. Farmer's, which lasted forty days; George Stevens'. Not less inviting, too, is that of George Smith, sold in 1867, and which is described as "*Very Valuable Library in all Languages, large papers, and splendid bindings, Bibles, Liturgies, Splendid Works of Engravings, Early Quarto Plays, Ballads, Chap-Books and Drolleries. Twenty-two days' sale, priced.*"

The Perkins sale and its effects are thus enthusiastically described: "*Formed by Henry Perkins, comprising many Splendid Illuminated MSS. of the highest class, a remarkable Collection of*

Ancient Bibles, examples of Printing on Vellum, Choice Specimens of Early Topography, the Four Folio Editions of Shakespeare, Valuable County Histories, and Fine Books in all Classes of Literature, sold by Auction, by Gadsden, Ellis, and Co., in the Great Library at Hamworth Park, June 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 1873. Imp. 8vo, with nine facsimiles of Paintings in MSS. The excitement caused by this magnificent sale (undoubtedly one of the finest in this century) will long be remembered. Newspapers contained leading articles upon it, magazine writers described it, and some editors actually had telegrams sent each day from Feltham, giving the prices fetched by the principal lots. The sale included the famous Mazarine Bible on Vellum, which sold for £3400."

"Men of the Time" is a well-known dictionary of contemporaries. But who knows that the edition of 1856 "contains the curious and amusing error in the article of Samuel Wilberforce, Bishop of Oxford: 'A sceptic as it regards religious revelation, he is, nevertheless, an out-and-out believer in spirit movements.' This paragraph had slipped out of the previous article of 'Robert Owen' into the article on the 'Bishop of Oxford.'"

Macaulay, it will be remembered, used to collect street ballads, and had made a large gathering. Not long ago I was offered no less than three thousand, including some on the battle of Bunker's Hill, for, I think, a five-pound note. The following is even more tempting:—"Street Literature. Remarkable and Desirable Parcel of General Old Stock, purchased long since from time to time from a *bona-fide* old Street Chanter, now dead, and probably the Last of his Race (for the present degenerate specimens, together with their ware, are, in their own phraseology, 'Shoful').—It

includes (I.) nearly eighty of the Penny Song Books, and Sheets of Songs, such as 'Lover's Harmony'—'Jovial Fellows'—'Budget of Mirth'—'Comus's Chaplet'—'Convivial'—'Free and Easy'—'Inledon's Harmony'—'Young Men and Maids' Delight'—'Madame Vestris,' etc., etc. (II.) About the same number of Single Sheet-Songs, together with about (III.) five hundred Farthing Slip Songs (Murders, Scandals, Satirical, Political, Passing Events, Accidents, Funny, Fistic, Thieves', and Low Life, and all other kinds of Songs) from the Classic Presses of Jemmy Catnach, Pitts, Birt, Disley, and other Seven Dials' Worthies; in most cases embellished with woodcuts of all styles of Art, from that of Bewick to that which a Schoolboy would disdain. Fifthly and Lastly, a little lot of Broad-sides, including some specimens of the fine Religio-Moral Broad-sides of the Repository, with cuts by Bewick, published at the beginning of this century; and a few nice Large size 'Last Dying Speeches,' among which are those of Tawell the Quaker; Mary Ball of Coventry; Rush, the Stanfield Hall Murderer; Palmer of Rugeley; and others, with illustrations lugubrious in more senses than one. Price for this most interesting lot, £3 13s. 6d."

What an entertaining entry is the following! I have spoken of Mr. Winston, the laborious theatrical collector on actors. Next follows a small section of his labours referring to "Theatres in the Provinces at the end of the last century. A MS. Diary of above four hundred pages in Winston's autograph, with an Index describing Theatres, Buildings where Plays could be acted, Audiences, Pieces and Theatrical Gossip relating to above three hundred Towns and Villages and Places in the Provinces, 4to, £15 15s. This MS. is full of interest for the Theatre in the provinces in the last

century. A specimen of its contents is appended. 'Battle. About 25 years ago (1775) one Gilbert played in the Great Hall, Battle Abbey; no one came after, till Henley, about ten years ago (1790), who played in a barn just out of the town, then in a large coach-house down the George Yard; and last winter they built a new theatre in the principal street, a very neat house, will hold £40. Charge nine guineas. Very good town. Edinburgh, 1800. The Circus, Jones Proprietor. Play every evening, and preached in on Sunday by the Methodists, who pay £50 per annum for it. The Pulpit stood on the stage. For wantonness once the curtain was taken up, and the scene that stood during the service was Botany Bay, painted for some new piece by Jones. Macclesfield. Old Stanton, Manager, 1795. Played in a temporary building. The dressing-rooms were the stalls of a stable, and the roof so bad, they had pattens and umbrellas to walk to the wings; people in the pit called for blankets to keep them from catching cold, and actually sat with umbrellas in the pit. Miss Mellon played Lady Teazle, and waited at the (door) to go on the stage with an umbrella. It was occasioned by an unexpected rainy evening. Stanton was very correct in beginning at the time advertised. He went from Macclesfield on business, deputed his son manager, who was not so correct as his father, who unexpectedly returned about a quarter of an hour after the announced time of beginning; finding no performance going on, or performers dressed, he rung up the curtain, and made every one go on in the state they were. Young Stanton went on without breeches.'" Old Stanton, it may be added, was the country manager who waited on Johnson and Boswell at Lichfield, to ask their patronage.

Or who that had twenty guineas to spare would grudge it for such a kind of entertainment as follows?—"Ancient Prints by Collaert, De Jode, H. Cock, Heemskerk, Visscher, Wierx, M. de Vos, Sadeler, etc., etc., bound in four thick oblong volumes, nearly One Thousand Five Hundred splendid Old Prints, by the above Masters, newly bound in dark morocco, super extra, gilt edges, by Townsend, Twenty Guineas. 1600-43. The Gem of Mr. Bragge's collection, it forms a delightful assemblage of the most beautiful works of the Old Masters. Such another collection could not be brought together, as many of the prints are of great rarity, and must have cost Mr. Bragge a Hundred Pounds or more. The price now asked is not the cost of the elaborate bindings of the volumes, being about fourpence each print." There is a bitter truth in this remark. The collector collected for the purchaser, and laid out probably five times the amount it is sold at, for the pleasure of another! Alas! he never keeps an account of or reckons up what his treasures cost, otherwise he would be shocked and ashamed.

Here is a specimen of a right noble sort of work, really a handsome thing to look at. "Pynson, 'Intrationum excellentissimus liber necessarius quibus leg. hominibus: fere in se continens quem medullam diversam materium ac plit. tam realium, personalium, et mixt,' etc. Folio, black letter, calf neat. £9 10s. Lond. in vico vulgacitur Flete Strete in officina honesti viri Ricardi Pynson, 1510. A fine specimen of Pynson's press, having the title printed in red and black, a full-page woodcut at back of title, and the printer's name at the end of the volume. This copy is remarkably large, measuring thirteen and a half inches by nine, while the bottom margins measure no less than two

inches ; it has also the original blank leaves both at the beginning and end."

The following is connected with a long-forgotten bitter controversy:—"Bunn (Alfred), 'A Word with Punch on the respective Merits of his three Puppets, Wronghead (Douglas Jerrold), Sleekhead (Gilbert A'Beckett), and Thickhead (Mark Lemon),' with caricature portraits of the three Satirists, 4to, pp. 12, original illustrated wrapper, quite clean, very scarce. £2 10s. With this copy is bound in half calf, a folio sheet published by Hone, 1821, with numerous woodcut Illustrations by George Cruikshank, entitled 'A Slap at Slop.' There is a manuscript title, in the handwriting of the late George Daniel, couched as follows:—"A Word with Punch," by Alfred Bunn, very curious, very facetious, and very scarce ; to which is added by way of contrast "A Slap at Slop," also scarce, one of the many dull, indelicate, and riff-raff expectorations of a democrat and a dunce.'" Like G. Daniel!

Of a different class is the "'Commune of Paris Le Pere Duchêne,' complete in sixty-eight numbers as issued, with rude woodcut and different running title to each number, 8vo, sewed, Paris, 16 Ventôse, an 79, to 3 Prairial, an 79 (*i.e.* March to June, 1871). The above is a complete copy of the celebrated 'Père Duchêne,' published during the reign of the Commune in Paris in 1871. Its rigid suppression on the triumph of legitimate authority under Thiers renders a complete series a great rarity. The three writers of this periodical of sad and terrible memory, were Eugène Vermersch (a *littérateur* and poet of real merit), A. Humbert, and M. Vuillaume ; and they emulated, if not surpassed, the violence and coarseness of language which distinguished the 'Père Duchêne' of Hébert

and his associates in the Great Revolution. The last number is (strange to read!) a declamation against the want of vigour and severity of Raoul Rigault and Ferré, both of whom were soon after shot by order of the Legitimate authorities (Rigault summarily, Ferré after trial, with Rossel, at Satory), and are now regarded as martyrs."

Again: "Typographical Curiosities. Campbell (J. M.), 'Sermons and Lectures,' Greenock, 1832. 2 vols., fcap. 8vo, printed on paper manufactured with white lead, weighing 2 lbs., boards, unopened edges. 10s. 6d."

These speak for themselves:—"D'Horsay, or the Follies of the Day,' by a Man of Fashion (John Mills), 1844. 8vo, with portrait, vignette, and ten clever plates by 'George Standfast,' in the original cloth, uncut, £2 12s. 6d. An extraordinary and truthful *exposé* of the fast life of fashionable London thirty years ago. Anecdotes concerning, and the escapades, vices, and adventures of, Count D'Horsay, the Marquis of Hereford, the Earl of Chesterlane, Mr. Pelham, General Reel, Lord George Bedtick, Mr. George Bobbins, auctioneer, Earl of Raspberry Hill, 'the circumcised driver of the cabriolet' (Lord Beaconsfield), Lord Huntingtower, the Countess of Blessington, and other well-known personages are depicted with a piquancy that makes the narratives most amusing. Not only high life, but, where connected with the sketches, low life also is described, including descriptions of several notorious characters. The original owner of this copy has written in the names, but, without this assistance, they are too thinly disguised not to be palpable at first sight. The plates contain portraits of D'Orsay, Fanny Ellsler, Lord Chesterfield, Mr. George Payne, the Countess of Blessington, etc., etc. The present

copy contains the chapter describing the closing scene of the life of the 'Marquis of Hereford,' which is often wanting. Its scarcity is so great that a copy sold recently for £6." "Grammont, 'Mémoires de la Vie du Comte de Grammont (parle Comte Antoine Hamilton) contenant particulièrement l'Histoire Amoureuse de la Cour d'Angleterre sous le Regne de Charles II.' First edition, sm. 8vo, very fine copy in red morocco super extra, dull gilt edges, by Kaufmann, A Cologne, chez Pierre Marteau, 1713. £3 3s. 'Une particularité curieuse distingue l'édition originale. L'éditeur a pris soin d'indiquer en italique tous les mots sur lesquels il pensait que devait s'arrêter l'attention des lecteurs. On aurait peine à croire, sans en juger par soi-même, à quelle quantité de mots s'est appliqué ce procédé.—Gay.' The Duplessis copy, the condition of which could hardly be finer than the present, sold for one hundred and eleven francs."

Tastes now run greatly on choice first editions. Indeed, not long ago an ingenious gentleman collected a whole library of first editions, which of course, in due time, were sold by auction. It may be said generally that all first editions, even of late writers, are scarce and desirable. The very look and air of them is different; they seem shy, hesitating, and retiring, different from the bold, assured air of the later ones, when success has been attained. This is noticeable in the early editions of Lamb, Coleridge, and other poets.

The two following specimens are worth redeeming from the obscurity of a catalogue. The first, from Sir. E. L. Bulwer to his publisher, a specimen of true modesty, dated August 31, 1830: "I have received the MS. of the third volume of the "Disowned," . . . the attempt at robbery, as

you term it—shall be omitted. . . . Will you let me know whether you consider the objection you have raised of a similarity between the speeches prior to the deaths of Mordaunt and Talbot, of sufficient consequences to require the omission of one of the speeches. If so, I shall leave out Talbot's. I wish you would also let me know whether you think *Ld. Ulswater's death at all Theatrical—I am inclined to think it is,* etc., etc. A very desirable specimen." The next a sound piece of advice from Mr. Tennyson: "Write verses in your leisure hours if you like it, but never let them interfere with your proper work in life"—well worth the nine and sixpence asked.

"What a warm day for tragedy!" writes Talma to a friend. "Bloomfield," writes Coleridge to Haydon, "has been in considerable distress owing to the failure of his bookseller. A subscription has been opened for him, and the Duke of Grafton, whose tenant he was, has given £5!!! The same illustrious person sold the Library which his father had collected. God help England if his Grace of Grafton be a fair specimen of the patrons of the day. But I know that he is not."

"My dear Miss Cushman," writes Samuel Rogers, "*Any day or Every Day! I shall be delighted to see you.*"

Some allusions by Edward Kean have a painfully significant interest. One is dated Paris, July 11, 1824, and relates to the action *Cox v. Kean*: he says, "I dare say many of my letters are very silly, and will create some laughter in a Court of Justice, but they are not more preposterous than those of greater men, who have been, like me, the victims of the *amor parum honestas*; for instance, the Duke of York." Again: "Dublin, August 26, 1824, 'I cannot send you any money, for the

best of all possible reasons, I have none to send—for the first time in my theatrical career.' The remainder of the letter is occupied with full details in relation to the Cox affair, and relates several circumstances which, if they do not excuse his offence, in either a moral or legal view of it, certainly afford a measure of palliation, an opinion which the jury seemed to entertain upon the evidence adduced, by their verdict of one farthing damages. Belfast, Nov. 26, 1824, relative to the 'Cox' affair: 'I positively declare against the use of Mr. Drury's name: I owe everything to the family, and cannot consent to blend the sacred name with two such rascals as myself and the Alderman;' with other passages strongly recriminatory of the other side."

Here we come upon an "Autograph of Hannah More, Cheap Repository Tracts, five woodcuts, fine portrait of Hannah More inserted, and Autograph on fly-leaf (see Note), 12mo, half bound, 10s. 'My old Friend William Upcott requested Mrs. Hannah More to oblige him with her Autograph, she replied "Yes, with much pleasure, if you Mr. Upcott will oblige *me* with 10s. for a Charity for which I am Collecting," my warm hearted Friend was too gallant to say No to a Lady, she then produced this Volume of the cheap Repository Tracts, and wrote the text of Scripture from Psalm 23 (on fly-leaf) with her Name and date of Year.—J. B.'"

The following is a well-known but rare book:—"Beaconsfield, 'The Revolutionary Epick,' the Work of Disraeli the Younger, author of 'The Psychological Romance,' Moxon, 1834. Both Series, 2 vols., 4to, vol. i. bound in half calf gilt, vol. ii. in boards, uncut, very rare, £3 3s. An exceedingly interesting copy, bearing the following inscription in Lord Beaconsfield's hand-

writing:—‘The Honble. Mrs. Norton, with the Author’s kindest complts.,’ and on the opposite leaf, in her hand, the following:—‘Caroline E. Sara Norton, Her valued Book.’

“According to Cocker” is a well-known phrase, but scarcely any book is so rare as the first edition: “Cocker (E.), ‘Arithmetic, being a plain and familiar Method,’ etc., portrait, calf of the time, a very good clean copy, 21s. 1694. An early edition of this celebrated and popular work in constant use during the latter part of the seventeenth and the whole of the eighteenth century. So rare are copies of the editions before 1700 that Dr. Dibdin was never able to see one prior to the thirty-second, which appeared some time after 1700, the twentieth edition appearing in that year. Of the First Edition, which is said to have been published in Sept., 1677, for T. Passenger on London Bridge at the price of 1s. 6d. (though others give the date 1678), such is the rarity that only three or four copies are known, and those that have turned up for sale have continually advanced in price; Dunn-Gardner’s copy in 1854 bringing £8 5s., Geo. Smith’s (with the Decimal Arithmetic, 1st edition) £18 15s., and Sir W. Tite’s (which sold at Corser’s sale for £12 5s.) £14 10s. Poor Cocker did not live to enjoy the great renown his book obtained, as he seems to have died in the year of its first appearance.’ The above is Dunn-Gardner’s note, and the present copy is from his collection.”

The following are classed as “Keaniana”:—
 “Play-bill of May 24, 1827, with part of the Frill of Kean’s Shirt torn off by him while performing Sir Giles Overreach—Playbill of Oct. 1, 1827, Charles Kean’s first appearance—Playbill, Feb. 21, 1810 (at Haverfordwest), including both Mr.



and Mrs. Kean (the former as Harlequin in 'Mother Goose')—Playbill, Feb. 12, 1814, Kean's first appearance as the Duke of Gloucester—Playbill, Jan. 26, 1814, Kean's first appearance at Drury Lane; other Old Bills, the Young Roscius, in 1805, etc.—Newspaper Cuttings, Kean in America, Cox v. Kean, etc. Tavern Bill at the 'White Hart,' Salisbury." In another catalogue there are letters "from Thomas Campbell to Lord Holland, dated Alfred Place, 1837, thanking Lord Melbourne for employment for his nephew, which gives him £150 a year, 'no bad provision for a hardy, frugal Scotchman, reared on crowdy and sheep's trotters;' for himself he has 'no claim on the Whigs as a body, for they have provided for me thirty years ago beyond my deserts;' from the same to Northcote, the painter, who professes to have been hurt at some account of his conversations, saying 'the infernal Hazlitt shall never more be permitted to write for the *New Monthly*.' From Sir Joshua Reynolds to Valentine Green, the engraver, dated Leicester Fields, 1783, refusing to allow him to engrave the portrait of Mrs. Siddons as the Tragic Muse, concluding, 'I shall follow your advice (to give for the future unequivocal answers), and now inform you that you shall not do the print.' From Mrs. Siddons, inviting some one to see her in 'The Provoked Husband,' for seats for which piece she is 'almost torn to pieces.' From Sir Philip Francis to Lady Holland, 1805, saying, 'Next to the misery of being sixty years old, the hardest of all things is to be forty miles off. I live by contact, I die by intervals. If ever young again, my second youth shall be devoted to you. Helas, belle dame, les souvenirs du passé font le tourment de l'avenir.'"

We find the poet laureate, in a letter to that bookseller of the poets, Edward Moxon, "accepting his proposal to go shares with him in the risks and profits of the publication of his book, and asking to have the proof-sheets twice sent to him for correction." To the same bibliopole, the poet Campbell confides, in 1837, that he "has been reading Sir Egerton Brydges' Autobiography: 'Such an exhibition of a man's ulcerated vanity creates one's disgust.'"

Then we have "A Water-colour Drawing, being the Portrait of a Sailor, as he attended Lord Byron's Funeral, preserved in a velvet case. £5 5s. The letter is an account of an English sailor in the Greek service who constantly saw Byron, and who followed him to the grave. His statement having been taken down, Charlotte Wilson forwarded this copy to Byron's sister:—'so kind-hearted and generous, bless ye, he was always doing good, and did not mind what perils he underwent. There was not a man in the whole ship or among all the Greeks but what *almost adored him*.'"

For eighteen and sixpence we could procure an odd MS., to wit, Queen Charlotte's "Establishment of Ordinary Wages and Allowances yearly by Us unto Our Officers and Servants, etc., under Our Sign Manual' (1761), twenty-four pages of very neat writing, 8vo, cf., curious."

Some one collected and put aside the answers to the Duke of Wellington's invitations to dine with him on the anniversary of Waterloo; they amounted to a hundred and thirty. But every year they dwindled away.

Then we have "Five Songs in the Handwriting of Burns, of rather a roysterous and free nature, some of which have never been published. They are addressed to Mr. Robert Gleghorn, Farmer,

Saughton Mills, near Edinburgh. Two of the songs are included in very humorous and characteristic letters."

A sketch of a famous book-collector, by Rev. A. Dyce "to Sir Egerton Brydges, Nov. 1, 1833: 'Booksellers and Book-buyers cannot at present think of anything but Heber's Library, which, if a will is not found (and none has yet appeared), must come to the hammer! Poor man! he expired at Pimlico—in the midst of his rare poverty—without a friend to close his eyes, and from all I have heard, I am led to believe that he died broken-hearted; he had been ailing for some time, but took no care of himself, and seemed, indeed, to court death. Yet his ruling passion was strong till the last; the morning he died, he wrote out some memoranda for Thorpe, about books which he wished to be purchased for him. He was the most liberal of book-collectors; I never asked him for the loan of a vol. which, if he could lay his hand on it, he did not immediately send me,' etc. A splendid letter, upwards of eighty lines closely written." What constitutes "a splendid letter"?

Lord Byron writes "from Dorant's Hotel (Albemarle Street) to John Hanson, Esq., Chancery Lane: 'Dear Sir—I shall be particularly obliged by the loan of one hundred, *promised* last night, and for this and other sums lent by you I shall sign a receipt with great pleasure. I hope this will not find your determination altered by last night's repose. Yours truly, BYRON.'"

Scraps from Lamb's letters to Walter Wilson in 1828, with notes of books to be referred to, and other hints for Defoe's works then in preparation. "Capt. G. Carleton wrote his own Memoirs. Puzzelli puzzles me, and I am in a cloud about

Donald McLeod." Also to the same, Enfield, 15th Nov., 1829. "Thanks for a copy of Defoe. Mary is by my side just finishing the second volume. It must have interest to divert her away so long from her modern novels. . . . Hazlitt is going to make your book a basis for a review of Defoe's novels in the *Edinbro'*." A more singular specimen is the following, "addressed to Hone. 'Miss Hazlitt (niece to Pygmalion) begs us to send you for Mr. Hardy a parcel. I have not thanked you for your Pamphlet, but I assure you I approve of it in all parts, only I would have seen my Calumniator at hell, before I would have told him I was a Xtian, *tho' I am one*, I think, as much as you;' a fine specimen, £5 5s."

Then Moore, from Sloperton, in 1831: "My finances are in a most deplorable state; I have been passing three days with the Duchess of Kent and our little future Queen; we had a great deal of Music, the Duchess sang some of my Melodies with me better than I ever heard them performed."

The following is curious:—"Mr. Johnson begs the favour of Mr. Cadell that he will send his binder two 'False Alarm' and two 'Falkland Islands,' one of each to be bound together in half binding. Let it be done as soon as it can.' Autograph. II. Copy of an important Letter of the Doctor's in the hand of Malone, dated Nov. 10, 1783, concluding, 'As we daily see our friends die round us, we that are left must cling closer, if we can do nothing more, at least pray for one another . . . and prepare ourselves for the last great trial,' etc. One page, folio. Together, £1 17s. 6d." "Dr. Barnard, Bishop of Killaloe. Two pp., 4to, 1791. 'Surprised at the King's *marked* disapprobation of the Academy's Present to Johnson's Monument.'"



Cobbett writes on a "printed card, with autograph signature, 'No Irishman will be employed on any account, even if he be the bearer of this card.' To a Bishop. Curious." And again: "'I hope we shall, with Waterloo's resolute aid, live to see the bull frogs fall, and Cobbett's corn rise up all over England and Scotland, the Irish preferring the 'nice maly potatoe,' it being so well adapted to soften their organs.' Speaks of O'Connell, etc., etc."

Mr. Harvey offers a proof-sheet of Goldsmith's "Natural History," with a marginal note in his hand-writing, "This is very correct."

Who would not like to secure "Autobiographical Memoir" of Etty, R.A., "in the form of a Letter to his Cousin Mr. John Clark, seventy-nine pages in the autograph, and signed, Oct. 28, 1848. Unpublished. This Autobiographical sketch was the only one made by the artist, and is full of interesting details of his public and private life, his paintings, etc.; it was drawn up for the purpose of publication."

Documents of quaint, deep historic interest occasionally turn up, as "An Order of Admission to the Trial of Louis XVI., signed by the President. One page, 8vo, with a memorandum, in the autograph of Sir John Coxe Hippesley: 'This day was the last the King appeared at the Convention, when M. de S. made his defence, Dec. 26, 1792. This ticket was presented by the Sec. of State.'" And almost as curious the "Order for the Arrest of Louis Napoleon, issued by the French Republic, Juin 13, 1848. One page, 4to. Dated from Meulins, and signed by the Prefect."

It is surprising how official letters of State escape from royal custody; such, for instance, as "the letter of Bonaparte, as First Consul, L.S., in the name of the French People, to his Britannic

Majesty, King George III., May 5, 1802, on vellum, a beautiful specimen of calligraphy. Had received the King's letter intimating the recall of Francis James Jackson, Minister Plenipotentiary to the French Republic, whose conduct had merited his entire approbation; hoped that on his return he would convince the King of his personal sentiments, and sincere disposition to maintain the union and good feeling then existing between the two nations. Signed Bonaparte, and countersigned Ch. Mau. Talleyrand."

I have also seen an official letter of George IV.'s, announcing his accession to the French Court; a really beautiful specimen of handwriting and which was purchased by the British Museum.

A series of letters relating to Rousseau seem to make up quite a little story. In the old *European Magazine* will be found other letters bearing on the same transactions while he was in England with his friend Devonport. "Rousseau. Wooton, April, 1764. Bill paid for R. from Dec., 1766, to May, '67 (curious items), (C. Hall for 3 bushel of Malt for Mademoiselle, 15s.; cheese, 3d. per pound). Marshall Conway. 4to, 1757. A most interesting letter, detailing particulars of his interview with George III., and the pension of £100 granted to Rousseau, although refused by his friend David Hume. Viscount Nuneham (E. Harcourt) to Hume respecting Rousseau. Two and a quarter pp., 4to. M. Laleand. 4to. To the same, 'We have cried over your letter to Mr. Hume,' etc., etc. R. Davenport. Intimate and kind friend to Rousseau. One page, folio. In angry terms. Price £3 10s. together."

The following burst from Thomas Campbell is characteristic, concluding thus: "Did not your heart's blood boil with indignation at the hypocrisy

of the scoundrel Nicholas in coming on board the *Talavera*? Would to God they had mopp'd him with boiling pitch."

Some autographs are amazingly rare, such as Sterne's and Smollett's:—"Smollett (Ann), Wife of Dr. Tobias Smollett. A.L.S. One full page, 4to. Dated Leghorn, Sept. 23, 1783. Written after the Death of the Novelist at Leghorn. Complaining of her misfortunes and distressed situation, etc., of which she gives painful details. Highly interesting, rare, and curious letter. (Mrs. Smollett was the accomplished and beautiful Anne Lascelles.) £2 8s."

It is curious to find Edward Gibbon, Esq., enforcing the payment of his rents: "'I must insist upon the tenants making up their rents to Lady Day—they must pay up one hundred pounds this month, and you must remit to Daniel Lascelles, Esq., Member of Parliament in London, anybody will tell your carrier—where he lives, he is a great merchant—I saw your brother, sister and children a little while ago. They are all well as we are here, except myself, we are now in the middle of wheat harvest—a good saving crop,' etc., etc., etc. £4 4s."

Again, this is interesting: "Mill. The following in his Autograph. One page, 4to. 'Mr. John Stuart Mill, one of the Assistant Examrs. to the E. I. Co.' 'Mr. Mill is one of the Candidates for Adms. into the Athenæum. He has been regularly proposed and seconded, and he now communicates the above particulars, which he is informed, were accidentally omitted at the time of Proposition.' Scarce. 9s."

The Duke of Sussex thus comments on Queen Caroline's trial: "'The business of the Queen (her Trial) has at length finished, which is a great bless-

ing, for at the same time it was a flagrant injustice, it was creating irritation in the country,' etc., etc. 4s. 6d."

I have spoken of the taste for what are called Elzevir editions, which seems carried to excess. It is like that for etchings, which are growing monotonous. The French are issuing vast numbers of dainty books, certainly beautifully printed, and possibly intended to show off binding as exquisite. One or two firms, such as Lemerre, have distinguished themselves in this direction. A popular book, for instance, was some time ago issued by the house of "Glady Frères," which may be fairly considered as a work of art. The work is "Manon Lescaut," a small octavo of not more than three hundred and eighty pages, and the price thirty francs. Paper, etchings, vignettes, printing, introduction, and editing are all by different hands. To show how carefully considered was the mere impression, I give the list and order of copies, which is printed on a fly-leaf:—"1. A small number taken off on Turkey Mill paper. There have been also printed for amateurs three hundred and thirty-three copies, each numbered, and comprising the following:—

On choice vellum 'raisin'	...	...	...	...	1
„ choice parchment ditto	...	...	...	...	2
„ Japanese quarto	...	...	...	...	30
„ Imperial Whatman	...	...	...	...	50
„ Chinese	...	...	...	...	50
„ Van Gelder's Dutch	...	...	...	...	200
					<hr/>
Total	...	...	...	...	333

These are refinements indeed.

CHAPTER XXIII.

BOOKSTALLS AND BOOK-BOXES.

TO the economical book-hunter, such as I am, it is a pleasant compensatory reflection that the grand collector pays dearly for his enjoyments, and if he greedily snatch at the best dishes, he has to pay an enormous reckoning. He has his treasures and his prizes to show to the admiring and envious visitor; but he has many a twinge in private when he thinks what his hobby has cost him. His extravagance is veiled by the reflection that he has secured a few "odd lots"—"now worth ten times, sir, what I gave for them"—for a song. It is a pleasant reflection that your own judgment and easy exploration, not your cash, has secured for you things of value. I myself belong to this category, and have found a great pleasure and a lightening of one's City walks by searchings and visits to the "book-boxes" and obscure sale-shops of the "trade."

The late Mr. Huth—a name familiar to few outside the bibliomaniac profession—was, perhaps, the most lavish collector of our time. His splendid library, the gathering of which occupied his life, is illustrated by a sumptuously printed catalogue filling five grand volumes. Here are nothing but copies in "fine condition." There is, indeed, this piteously grotesque side to the mania, that after a lifetime devoted to collecting, the heirs are delighted to use this labour to their own, and promptly despatch the contents to the auction-room. I have been assured, indeed, that there are



instances of the "collection" being hurried off even before the funeral of its owner.

Many a book-maniac has dwelt on the satisfaction found in periodically investigating the "boxes" of old books exposed at the doors of old book-sellers. This is akin to drawing from a lucky-bag, and not long ago I thus procured, at one haul, three choice specimens of elegant printing—a charming little Aldine quarto; a Bodoni, most elegant of typographers, with its binding and rich gilt edges; and a Baskerville. These, with a little furbishing up, were worthy of a place in "any gentleman's library." Nay, for a shilling or two, the careful sportsman who beats the ground scientifically may light on a little bit of old French binding, of crimson morocco embossed in faded gold, and which a little repairing and varnishing will put in good condition. It is extraordinary at how cheap a rate a collection, choice and interesting, can be made, and a single bookcase, or a cabinet or two, will hold a number of dainty little volumes, each of a particular interest and well worth showing to a visitor. There are china collectors on this economical but intelligent plan, who secure a trifling cup or figure as a specimen of each ware, and thus can have a fairly representative gathering at very little outlay, on which a lecture might be given of a very entertaining kind. On the other hand, I have often heard the wealthy collector sigh vexatiously as he shows you his treasures, and declare "*that he was ashamed to think of all the money they had cost him!*" Indeed, the aristocratic collector who has formed a handsome library is involved in expenses of the most serious kind. Binding alone is a frightful source of outlay. Rare books to be bound are worthy of, and require, binding by masters in the craft; and



the binding of a fine old quarto by Mr. Rivière would take, say, six months, and an outlay of from twenty to thirty pounds. }

On the four "first folios" of the divine Williams an essay might be written. There are so many variations, typographical blunders, different "states," that the investigation becomes interesting. A single leaf of these precious volumes has a market price of seven or eight shillings, for these are of value for completing defective copies; while a frontispiece fetches pounds. There are very few copies that are not thus "made up." When you come to buy a folio, it is necessary to collate every page, and at particular places you will find wrong pagination (p. 64, say, following 32). Most copies have lost their last two or three pages, or their first. A really fine copy, complete, without facsimile pages, is rare: a fine set of the four was lately offered for £450. The copy sold in 1864, at £716, was, I believe, the one purchased by the then Miss Burdett Coutts. I believe it would be impossible to find a really perfect copy of any of the four folios, as dealers have a fashion of "making them up" from other damaged and imperfect copies. This system of repairs, facsimiles, etc., has become quite an art and defies detection. I believe there is a gentleman at the Museum who, for a few shillings a page, will supply any missing leaves in facsimile. But it is often forgotten that a facsimile of a printed page or engraving really differs enormously from the original, in the fact that the one is an *impression* in low relief of a plate or types, the other merely an imitation on the surface. The one, therefore, has shadows from the dark spaces; the other none.

Yet, with these extravagant prohibitive prices, the ordinary outsider and economical book-hunter

may, if he use pains and discretion, secure something in this direction that, at a low price, will approach very nearly to the pleasure imparted at so extravagant an outlay. I myself possess a capital sound "second folio," wanting only four leaves, which cost me £3 15s. I have also the fourth, which cost me the same sum, but it lacks a good deal. A worthy bookseller once offered me a sort of damaged fragment of a backless and sideless folio, but still substantial, for thirty shillings or two pounds. On collating it, at the end unluckily, I found it was only a second edition. It was later disposed of to a painstaking bookseller, who, collating it leaf by leaf, found that half at least was of the first edition. He had by him another fragment of the first edition, and by adding facsimiles made up a fairly good first folio. My own disappointment was extreme.

A genuine Caxton, "The Golden Legend," was offered some years ago for two hundred and twenty guineas; a fine "Wynkyn de Worde" for £25. That truly rare work, Henry VIII.'s "Seven Sacraments," was not long since offered for £7 10s.

From other catalogues I learn many curious little bits of information. They tell me, for instance, what few perhaps know, that the amusing "Tour of Brown, Jones, and Robinson" was actually taken by Tom Taylor, Philips the artist, and Doyle himself.

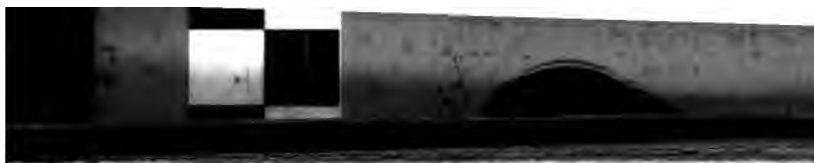
A well-known and common book, Mrs. Gaskell's "Life of Charlotte Brontë," has fallen within the category of "desiderata," owing to "many passages which have given offence being omitted or altered in subsequent impressions, especially the account of the Bridge School and some passages relating to the Rev. Patrick Brontë, who was still living when the memoir was published. Also,

many of the more painful details relating to the ruin and death of Charlotte Brontë's brother are only found here."

So with "An Original Portrait in Pencil by George Cruikshank, signed in full by the artist. The first and most interesting of all the portraits of Dickens. It appears that in 1836 or 1837, both Dickens and Cruikshank were members of a Club of Literary men, which had but a brief existence, under the title of the 'Hook and Eye Club.' At a meeting one night, Dickens was seated in an arm-chair, beside a table, book in hand, conversing, when Cruikshank exclaimed, 'Sit still, Charley, while I take your portrait,' and at once drew the one now for the first time offered for sale." Twenty-one pounds is not much for this. Lord Houghton secured the following:—"Johnson (Dr.), A Note Book, containing thirty-four pages, 8vo, of Anecdotes, Sayings, and Doings of Dr. Johnson, in the handwriting of James Boswell, being one of the books in which he jotted down from day to day any remarkable Sayings of, or Anecdotes relating to the Doctor, and containing many valuable particulars of the Life of the great Lexicographer, and of his opinions of Contemporary Literature and Eminent Persons, never published, rendering this a most valuable curiosity of Literature, and a most interesting relic of the great Author and his Biographer, preserved in a morocco case. Sixty guineas."

The catalogues also tell us concerning Mr. Ruskin's poems, "Poems Collected in 1850," that "The excessive rarity of this precious little volume is too widely known to need stating. Only one copy is known to have been sold by auction, and its eminent author resolutely refuses to allow it to be reprinted. Of the fifty-one pieces twenty-two

are not printed elsewhere, while the others are scattered among various magazines and annuals." For this little volume £40 is asked! Who knows either that in the "'Loving Ballad of Lord Bate-man,' very scarce, the preface was written by Charles Dickens? It has been by many attributed to Thackeray." Here, too, is a copy of the "American Notes for General Circulation.' First Edition, two vols, post 8vo., fine uncut copy in the original cloth, 1842. £8 8s. Perhaps the most interesting copy of this scarce book that has yet occurred for sale. It was a presentation copy to the author's father, and bears on each title his autograph, 'John Dickens, 18 Oct., 1842.' It also contains a document of two pages, 4to, entirely in the handwriting of Charles Dickens, and signed by him, being the original Minutes of a Meeting held on board the *Britannia* steamship, from Liverpool to Boston, 21st January, 1842, the Earl of Mulgrave in the chair, Charles Dickens, Esquire, Secretary and Treasurer to the Meeting. The Resolutions were: 1. Recognizing the nautical skill of the Captain during a tempestuous Voyage. 2. Subscription to purchase a piece of Silver Plate. 3. Appointment of a Committee. Then follows an account of the Captain attending to give thanks, the amount subscribed, and the inscription to be engraved on the plate, the whole finished with a very characteristic signature of Dickens. No account of this occurrence is given in Forster's 'Life of Dickens.'" But here we must pause.



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L'ENVOL.

SUCH is a simple unofficial view of a *littérateur's* life, set forth, the gentle reader may be assured, in a candid, unvarnished style. The details may be counted unpretending, and perhaps familiar. Yet the whole is not, I fancy, unattractive, if only significant of something beyond, which might be more weightily dealt with. It is, in truth, little more than "travels at one's fire-side," ever a cozy shape of journeying.



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